THE EXPATRIATES

LILIAN BELL

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The Expatriates

A Novel

By Lilian Bell

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By LILIAN BELL.

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TO

MY HUSBAND

ARTHUR HOYT BOGUE

THE EXPATRIATES

CHAPTER I

It was Paris. It was May.

A tall American with a lean brown face stood on the steps of the Bazar de la Charité, and watched the carriages thread their way through the tangle of other carriages and discharge their burdens of chiffon and lace in front of the door.

No dull pastime, this. To Sterling Townshend, one of the best whips in New York, the reckless driving of Paris coachmen was a never-failing source of interest. His only surprise was that, after all, there were so few human lives lost. As a rule, a smash-up only injured the horse.

To-day, in watching the jam in the rue Jean Goujon, he had for his excuse that he was waiting for his cousin, the Baronne Valencia. She, like himself, was an American, living in Paris simply because life in the French capital suited their taste more nearly than they would be suited anywhere else. Theirs was a simple proposition. They lived in Paris because they liked it. Why not?

The baronne came out before he had time to grow impatient. He afterwards remembered wondering why she would not remain, except to pass through the rooms once, and to leave some extravagant orders with her most intimate friends.

The young Duc de Briancourt, undeniably the most sought-after man in all Paris, was desperately enamoured of the baronne, who was still beautiful in spite of her half-grown children; but she frowned upon him with an amiability which kept him at her feet—perhaps as excellent and harmless a place as he could occupy with any degree of interest.

As she came out of the Bazar, attended by the duc, Townshend came forward, and the two escorted her to her carriage. The baronne walked easily and well. She was pleased with herself, and pleased with her two cavaliers. Her cousin Sterling was in great favor with her always.

She detained them both for a moment before she entered her carriage, telling them of her useless purchases; but even as she spoke, the old Duchesse de Briancourt, ill pleased that the rich American had left so abruptly, came to the door to ask the baronne to re-enter and see her laces. But the baronne, having spent twenty thousand francs in less than half an hour's promenade, smiled and declined. The duchesse was for pressing her, but perceiving an impatient movement of her son's shoulders, she kissed her hands to the American and went back to her booth.

"My adored friend," said the young man, "will you not come for one moment with me to see the cinematograph? Just one little moment of your time I am asking! I, who admire you so profoundly!"

The baronne shivered under her transparent gown, although the sun broiled.

"No," she said. "I am not superstitious, but I have a presentiment that I must hurry away from this Bazar. It may be a presentiment of the soul or of the purse, I do not know; but I cannot stop, even for you."

A shadow fell over the Frenchman's face, but he put her into her victoria with extravagant care, giving her

a tender pressure of the hand which made her cousin smile. Then the duc bounded up the steps to join the American, who had discreetly withdrawn, and they both watched her carriage out of sight before re-entering the Bazar.

As the victoria swept into the Avenue d'Antin, the baronne shifted her lace parasol and looked back. Then she sat up and looked again. The young men were just disappearing, while over their unconscious heads a thin blue line of smoke crept up from the tarred roof into the clear air.

" Something must be on fire near the Bazar," thought the baronne, leaning back comfortably. She glanced at the little carriage-clock and saw that it was just three.

All Paris was in the Bazar. The Faubourg St. Germain was deserted. The Duchesse de Trèves was selling tea at twenty francs a cup, and the smartest women in Paris were buying it of her, in order to see her black pearls at close range. The Duchesse de Fleury was for once regardless of her gay daughters, giving her whole mind to her bonbons, sitting back weighted down by her three hundred pounds of flesh and her priceless cameos, taking the money which Claire St. James, the pretty niece of the Duchesse de Briancourt, was extracting from the pockets of all who saw her big brown eyes.

The daughters of Madame de Fleury were happily within sight when she used her lorgnon ; otherwise she would not have been so tranquil. Their shrill voices were to be heard at the flower booth, presided over by the Marquise d'Auteuil. The marquise sat by grimly, and disapproved of the daughters of her old friend with all her heart. They were too bold, too aggressive, and by far too knowing. But then they spoke English, and cultivated Americans. What could one expect ? They handed her far too many gold pieces which required no

change for her to criticise them now, but she resolved to speak to the duchesse at her earliest opportunity. It was supposed that Comte Antoine d'Arcy would marry Lulu, and that the Comte de Rouen would eventually marry Francine if the duchesse would give her a larger *dot*. Otherwise Paris doubted if he would give up his *liaison* with Madame Flamont. Madame Flamont was the married daughter of the Duchesse de Trèves, and besides her handsome house in the Boulevard St. Germain, she rented an apartment from her friend the Comtesse de Brissy, which she occasionally occupied with the utmost discretion.

Lulu and Francine de Fleury, in turn, were quite openly hostile to Claire St. James, and decided her to be a little cat, with her pale cheeks, against which her downcast lashes looked so effective. Francine's eyes flamed fire when the tall American paused in front of Claire's booth and talked to her. She wished him to hear her speak her English, and she wished—well, she wished for him to stand and talk to *her*. She hated the little Frenchmen who fluttered about. She hated them the more because she knew that she must eventually marry one of them, and that even if Mr. Townshend should be sufficiently attracted by her American manners, upon which she so prided herself, as to ask for her hand, that her family would never listen to the proposition for one moment.

Unable to resist the temptation any longer, the young French girl darted across to her mother under pretext of speaking to her. Then perceiving Townshend, she caught his hand and that of the young Marquis d'Auteuil, and laughingly dragged them across to her booth.

The sister of an empress, who was presiding over a booth near by, rose to her feet protestingly, but just at that moment a column of smoke poured in upon this lit-

tle passageway, and in an instant more the flames broke through—from where, or how, only God knows.

Cries of a supreme and overmastering terror rose above the hissing and roaring of the flames, cries which sounded like animals in mortal pain. The human element disappeared, and people fought like demons.

Townshend recovered himself first, and struck down a Frenchman who was beating back the poor Duchesse de Trèves, who was lame. He seized her in his arms and carried her towards the door. Behind him he heard the insane cries of the hapless daughter of the unfortunate house of Wittelsbach, laughing terribly and crying, "Oh, the beautiful flames! the beautiful yellow flames!" Then came a shriek of agony and silence, except for the shouts of others.

Suddenly, in a whirl of silk skirts, some one rushed by, tugged at the gown of the woman in Townshend's arms, and disappeared. The duchesse screamed, and struggled to free herself from her preserver.

"Oh, my pearls!" she cried.

Townshend ground his teeth and held her tighter. In an instant he saw daylight, and dropped her without ceremony, watching her crawl away on her lame knee, shrieking for her black pearls, and forgetting to thank her preserver.

The Duc de Briancourt staggered past Townshend, dragging the fat Duchesse de Fleury by one arm.

"They are beating me! They are killing me!" wailed the Frenchwoman.

Comte d'Arcy trod on her prostrate body as all four reached the door together and were dragged out of danger by those outside.

"Oh, my poor mother!" cried the Duc de Briancourt. "I am too exhausted. I cannot go back. Save her, Townshend! Save her, my best friend!"

Without another word Townshend sprang into the

smoking, burning death-trap. There was no possibility of going back to the spot where he had left all his friends. But hearing voices in another direction, he plunged through the smoke down a side passage, at the end of which he saw light. He stumbled over the insensible body of poor Francine de Fleury, whom he had considered saved because she continued to cling to the hand of the Marquis d'Auteuil. He caught her up and hurried along, quite unembarrassed by her slender weight.

As he reached the light, he saw that it proceeded from a small window leading out to where rescuers stood; but to his horror he also saw that all those who were escaping were men, who beat down the women, struck them on the head or in the face, and, rendered insane by their terror, saved themselves at any cost. The frantic screams of a young girl on the outside, the voice of Claire St. James, came to his ears.

"Oh, my poor aunt! Save her, gentlemen! You are treading her to death. She is beneath the window. I escaped over her shoulders! For shame for you to leave her! Oh, my poor aunt! Gentlemen, I beg of you! Turn back and save her, for the love of God!"

Townshend saw the half-nude body of a woman beneath the window, covered with blood. In a fury which he never tried to explain, he attacked an old man with rouged lips and painted cheeks, who had his foot upon the woman, and knocked him senseless.

The baronne had not reached home after leaving the Bazar before she saw cabs driving by, carrying half-dressed women covered with the coachmen's blue overcoats. One, two, three rushed by her. She stood up and cried to them, asking what had happened.

"The Bazar de la Charité is burning to the ground!" they answered.

In an instant her horses were galloping back to the rue Jean Goujon, which she found blocked from end to end. Gathering her gossamer skirts tightly about her, she made her way to the side of the Bazar, to the famous window by which so many of the brave men of Paris made their escape. They met her scornful eyes as they leaped to the ground, one after another, unhurt, unscorched even, scuttling away like so many scared rats, never turning back even when hearing the agonized voice of poor Claire St. James.

Suddenly her screams ceased, for at the window, against a background of inky smoke, punctuated by jets of flame, appeared the strained face of the American, with the young French girl in his arms. His gray eyes were bloodshot, his face streaked with black, and his teeth gleamed with a curious whiteness; but eager rescuers received his burden. Then he disappeared for a moment, and with a tremendous effort he lifted the dead weight of the unfortunate Duchesse de Briancourt, the veins in his temples swelling almost to bursting under the violence of his exertion. A dozen arms reached up to bear her down in safety.

"Save yourself!" cried a score of voices; but the American turned back once more to secure the little old man who lay in a limp twist under his feet. Straining, groaning with pain, his lips drawn back from his teeth like an animal, Townshend raised himself and reached the window-sill. A sudden swirl of smoke poured out, the flames scorching his hair and the blackness hiding him from sight. A shout of horror and sobs and groans of pity came from those outside. Was he lost—the brave American? But no! A body leaped from the pouring smoke and fell beneath the window.

The baronne, his cousin, and Claire St. James dragged

the little old man and the tall American out of danger. The girl's sobs were choking her as she saw her aunt's body.

"The window was too high, baronne. We could not reach it, so she stooped and bade me step upon her poor shoulders. I did so, and was only half way out when a man struck me with his stick, and I fell to the ground here and broke my arm. I must have lost consciousness for a few moments, for I remember nothing more until I saw you and remembered that my aunt was still there."

"I fear my cousin was too late," said the baronne. "Her heart beats very faintly. If only we could get her to my carriage. Ah, here comes her son! Gently, my poor friend. Your mother is saved, although shockingly injured!"

With a great cry the young man bent over her and gathered her bleeding form close to his breast, while the tears streamed from his eyes.

"Oh, my poor mother! My beautiful little maman! Open your eyes and speak to your boy! Live! Live! for my sake! I, who love you so!"

He staggered to his feet, lifting her poor body, which the baronne covered with the blue skirt of a peasant, and so bore her through the crowd, who gave way before his tears and his piteous burden, and thus he carried her into a house near by. Claire followed, holding the rough covering in place with her uninjured hand. And it was the baronne who ran back to her cousin, who lay, still unconscious, where she had dragged him.

The next day the papers contained lists of the dead and injured—all women. Then people began to whisper, then to murmur, then to speak openly. Accusation followed innuendo, until Paris society was on the verge of complete disruption. Some challenges were made,

but these opened up such a series of internal wars that the newspapers finally announced that it was a woman's bazar, and that no men had been present. One even went so far as to declare that an American named Townshend was seen to leap from a side window to save himself. But this injustice the Duc de Briancourt corrected over his own name.

Townshend had not even a sprained ankle to show for his leap from the window. His scorched hair he ordered shaved close to his head; but in spite of no men having been present, day after day one saw carriages, with servants in deep mourning, driving in the Champs Élysées and the Bois, containing dignified old men done up in bandages guiltless either of blood or healing salve, while padded young dandies wore their arms in splints with admirable patience and fortitude.

Paris discreetly winked the eye, and paid visits of condolence, and went to masses for the dead women, while continuing to receive the living men. The post was filled for months with black-bordered letters, describing, as no alien pen can, one of the most painful and horrible tragedies of the history of the French nation.

Funerals took place where the caskets contained only a few female bones, with, perhaps, a pattern of old lace attached by which to identify them.

The mother of young d'Arcy was identified by a silver button in a torso, which had been placed there during a surgical operation.

Whole families were wiped out in an hour, and at night the husband and father had but a few scattered bones of his wife and daughters, which he buried in one grave.

As to the bandages and who were the real sufferers, only the valets and the doctors knew.

CHAPTER II

DRIVE up the Avenue des Champs Élysées until you reach the Rond Point, then turn to your left until you come to rue François 1er, and there you will find the hôtel of the Marquise d'Auteuil and her widowed daughter, the Comtesse de Brissy.

Their hôtel is not as grand as you would expect to find it from a name which dates back as far and records achievements such as those of both d'Auteuil and de Brissy. But the debts of the son of the marquise, the Marquis Raoul d'Auteuil, had been of such enormous proportions that the payment even of a portion of them had necessitated the sale of one of their two family estates. The comtesse, being still a young woman, naturally preferred to keep the hôtel in the Boulevard St. Germain and to sacrifice Vrianault, their château in Touraine, famous for its priceless tapestries. But this suggestion was received with such ferocity by her mother that it set the clever daughter to thinking. What could be the reason for such tigerish love?

But the proud old Frenchwoman kept her secret. Why should she tell Eugénie? Eugénie loved Raoul with such blind idolatry that she would sacrifice tradition, pride, everything to give him whatever he wished. She never knew of the bitter poverty of her mother's girlhood, of the anguish the poor branch of the family endured at the riches and display of the elder son's family. The marquise had married her cousin—married him without love, breaking her own heart in so do-

ing, had taken the handsome *dot* which had entailed privations to provide, and all for what? To join the two families, to weld the inheritance, to become the mistress of Vrianault, and to own the tapestries! In looking back over her loveless life, the marquise thought bitterly that Eugénie might have suggested the sale of her two eyes with less pain than the loss of the tapestries would prove.

Thus, three years ago, they had sold the town-house to the Baronne Valencia, an American, whose fortune kept up its magnificence suitably, and for three years the marquis had the grace to leave his mother and sister in a sort of suspicious peace. But at the end of that time, when he made really a clean breast of affairs, there were but two things from which to choose: utter ruin and perhaps his suicide, or the sale of Vrianault.

The Marquis d'Auteuil was twenty-six, and cool beyond most in the ways of the world, but even he was not proof against the grayness which overspread his mother's face at this ultimatum. Then the comtesse came to the rescue with another suggestion. A rich American! She made it timidly, almost fearfully. She was afraid her mother might strike her, for the mention of so great sacrilege. And as to Raoul—she watched his white face apprehensively. What could have happened to stir him so? He wore his cloak of debts so lightly, this haggard anxiety must portend some secret fear. What discovery overshadowed him? It was suspicious, too, the way in which he agreed to the suggestion, stipulating only that he should be allowed to go to America at once to be quite sure the riches were there and to be had. He would take no risks—not he! He made a wry face when his sister mentioned the only rich American they knew, Miss Maria Hollenden, but he made no promises either way.

He persuaded his sister to mortgage her apartment-

house in the rue Marbeuf, to provide him with a handsomer sum than his mother could afford, and then he set off, leaving the two women in their little hôtel in rue François 1er, to get on as best they could.

That Eugénie would manage, he felt sure. A handsome, well-fed Jew owned the hôtel and let it to the comtesse on terms the exact nature of which no one knew. But when the comtesse negotiated the marriage of the Jew's son to the pretty daughter of an impoverished friend of hers, and chaperoned the Jew's daughter for a season at Hombourg, it is safe to say that the Comtesse de Brissy was well recompensed for these services. She sometimes revolted from the thought of her condescension, but her straitened means were such that her ancient lineage was often called upon to be her banker. To add to her discomfort, her brother was always calling for more money and shifting his gaming debts upon her shoulders.

But who could resist him? His sad brown eyes had almost the same effect upon his own sister as upon every other woman upon whom he chose to bend them. His pale face spoke of infinite refinement, and his hands were the most famous in all Paris. They were finer and more delicate than any woman's, and more than once he had posed through sheer vanity for the hands of some beautiful female statue, whose model had not possessed hands of the required delicacy. This very season one of the most talked-of pictures in the Salon boasted Raoul d'Auteuil's hands peeping from the *point de Venise* laces in a certain "Portrait of a Lady."

His sister's pride in his triumphs was almost as great as his. She plotted and schemed to furnish him money with a diabolical cleverness which her own necessities never called forth.

Quite near by, in the rue Marbeuf, she had let the *en-*

tresol of one of her apartment-houses to Miss Maria Hollenden, who lived there alone with an elderly maid and two men-servants.

This, of itself, is not an important fact, save that it ministered in opposite ways to each of the two women. Maria Hollenden would not have occupied the *entresol* of any other apartment-house in all Paris, but to rent from the Comtesse de Brissy was to have frequent dealings with her personally. The comtesse had induced her to take it on a six-year lease at twice the rent she asked the French occupants of the other apartments by assuring her that ordinarily she would not rent to Americans, but in this instance she would let it to her friend, her dear little friend Maria.

That word "friend" finished the transaction, for before she had done speaking Maria signified that she would take the apartment, and in three days' time had saddled herself with a French lease, at an enormous rental, of an apartment with three sides fronting on the streets, thereby making herself a pretty penny to pay on door and window tax alone.

The Marquise d'Auteuil had been a famous huntswoman in her day. For that reason she still retained the mannishness—one cannot say gentlemanliness—of her dress at the period when she rode. Her grayish-brown hair was short and straight, and she parted it on the side. She wore no stays, but her tailor-gown was tight-fitting, with large buttons set widely apart down the front of her bodice. She trod the earth in flat-heeled English boots, and with a stride so long that it turned her sideways at each step. An Englishwoman in her place would have looked the part, but when a Frenchwoman copies English clothes she never remembers to translate the text of herself to match her binding.

"My dear," she said, in a throaty voice which she had carefully cultivated since she once rode to hounds in

England—" my dear, how did you manage to rent the *entresol* to your *protégée* at such a price ?"

" By telling her that I hated Americans," answered her daughter.

" Ah, and then ?"

" Then I said I would let it to *her*."

" Did she take it upon that ?"

" No, she still hesitated, so I called her ' my dear friend, Maria,' and then she signed the lease."

The marquise laughed.

" I smell cigarettes," she said. " Has Alexandre de Briancourt been here ?"

" No ; I made Maria smoke one. It makes her so ill I delight to do it."

" That is not like you, my angel," said her mother.

" No, but these Americans make me vicious. They bring out all the barbarism in my nature. I would like to kill Maria for her ugly face and her millions and her fawning ways."

" You are vexed, too, over Hedwig's giving notice ?"

" Yes, I am more than vexed ; I am distressed. Think how long it took me to train her just how I wanted my palms tickled, and just how to put me to sleep. I never shall have the courage to train another maid."

" I am surprised that your ' dear friend ' Maria does not offer. You permitted her to brush your hair when you were nervous. You will have her in a cap and apron next."

The comtesse laughed.

" She is rather proud, for an American, in spite of all that I allow her to do for me. She is coming this afternoon to take me to drive."

" You are very clever, Eugénie, but I think I would not condescend to too great an intimacy with Americans. They are so pushing."

" My acquaintance with Mlle. Hollenden at least

saves me cab hire," said the comtesse, with a little laugh, as she saw the carriage of her American tenant drive up.

The comtesse possessed rather a sad face when in repose, and it was one of Maria Hollenden's greatest pleasures to cause her face to light up with a smile. For this purpose she expended time and money lavishly until she flattered herself that the Frenchwoman's smile was the result of enjoyment in her American friendship.

They had met in Rome, whither the comtesse had gone upon the death of her husband. She was prostrated with grief, and Maria, there also with her elderly maid and a paid travelling companion, courted her with flowers, fruits, books, and music until finally the comtesse sent for her, and the American woman's ambition was realized. She was face to face with a woman of title, a woman of ancient lineage, of proud name and of noble birth. In all this she was not mistaken, as Americans are prone to be in their titled friends, for Vrianault was one of the oldest châteaux in Touraine, and the family d'Auteuil was of royal descent.

So assiduously did Miss Hollenden pay attentions to the comtesse that in a moment of weakness the Frenchwoman, bored, sad, and in need of diversion, suggested that Miss Hollenden pay her a few days' visit at Vrianault on her way north.

At that invitation the supreme moment of the American's life arrived.

There is something strangely pathetic about an American woman's worship of titles. It is so sincere, so deep-rooted, so overpoweringly honest. Let Americans try to conceal it as they will—let the men mock and the women dissemble—yet, within an hour after they have really met a man of title, both will find themselves talking of it.

" Beastly bore, these women's teas," says the scoffer dropping in at his club. " My wife has one to-day, and I only stayed to say ' How d'ye do' to Lord Graystone-

house. The women are all going crazy about him, as women do over a title. By-the-way, have you met him ?"

And the dissembler says :

" My dear, *have* you met the Marquise de Fashoda ? She is simply enchanting. She has asked me to visit her this summer at her place in Switzerland. I gave her a tea this afternoon. So sorry I did not know you were in town, or I would have asked you, but I only had a *few*, you know. The marquise is so exclusive. But she was delighted with the sincerity of the Americans, she said."

At their respective hotels, Lord Graystonehouse is probably cursing the damned nuisance of having one's host stick so close to one's heels, and introduce one to every one on the whole place, while the marquise is relating with fine rage to her sympathetic maid how those women squeezed and wrung her hand and ground her rings into it until her fingers were bleeding from her diamonds.

" And they call such inhuman torture—sincerity !" cries the marquise, never knowing that each woman had tried to impress her individuality upon the titled prize by main force, simply because of the magic handle to her name.

And so Maria Hollenden was for three days the guest of the Comtesse de Brissy at Vrianault. She wrote to her father that she was there for three weeks—not that she intended to falsify things, but somehow her statements were not quite accurate, especially when dealing with persons of title and ancient châteaux.

These letters, written at great length and with generous imagination, had no small effect upon the Michigan lumberman, who had made his huge fortune in lumber, after he had made and lost one fortune in the Nevada mines when he had married the mother of Maria.

It struck him as little short of magic that this low-born daughter of his, who was associated in his mind with all

the mean and sordid of his life, and the bitter poverty of his early years, should now be on terms of intimacy with the nobility of the Old World. If it had been Rose, now, or Shirley, it would have seemed more fitting. They were the product of his advancement. They belonged to his prosperity and his success. They were contemporaneous; but Maria marked an epoch which he looked back upon with wonder and a certain grim American humor.

As Maria drove to the hôtel of the Comtesse de Brissy in rue François Ier, a year after leasing her *entresol*, she was turning over in her mind the astonishing news of the family reunion which her father was bringing about. She was utterly upset between her fine rage of eagerness to see her adored father and her instinctive jealousy of this new sister, whose youth menaced her supremacy even if her beauty, as shown by photographs, was inconsiderable.

"You seem *distraite*, my dear," said the comtesse, as she stepped into Maria's little hired victoria. "Where shall we drive?"

"Oh, in the Bois, I suppose," answered Maria. "I have something to tell you."

"And I something to tell you. But I want to go first to consult Falize about a communion set. Now, what is your news? Mine is surely the best, so it can wait."

"My news is that my father and Rose and Shirley are coming to Paris to live. We are all to live together! Fancy!"

"The *entresol!*" thought the comtesse, with a contraction of the heart. Then she leaned back contentedly as she remembered the six-year lease, and how helpless an American is in the clutches of French law.

"Ah, and shall you like that? It must be charming to have a sister. I never had one. And I might almost say I have no brother, with Raoul away trav-

elling so constantly. Last winter in Egypt, now in America."

Maria blushed at the mention of Raoul's name. The watchful eye of the comtesse saw it, and she ground her teeth imperceptibly as she noticed how unbecoming a blush was to poor Maria's muddy skin.

"*Mon Dieu!* It is almost too much," she said to herself.

"And you, what is your news?"

"Stay. We have not yet gone over all of yours. When are they coming?"

"Within the month."

"And they will set up an establishment, I suppose? You will have an hôtel?"

"Hardly that, I am afraid," said Maria. "A fine apartment, I suppose."

"But your father is very rich, is he not?" said the comtesse, with that curious glistening of the eye which marks the mention of money with the French.

"Yes, he is said to be," answered Maria, proudly.

"How rich, do you imagine?" persisted the comtesse.

"Oh, I don't know," answered the American, moving uneasily. She always felt something closing around her when the comtesse discussed her father's wealth.

"Up in the millions of francs, I suppose," persisted the comtesse.

"Even in the millions of dollars, if you like," flashed out Maria. She had sometimes to recall forcibly that the comtesse was really a d'Auteuil, and therefore a representative of the very best in all France, otherwise she might almost have thought her a trifle vulgar, judged by American standards.

"But your family is not like the ordinary American *nouveau riche*," proceeded the comtesse, amiably. "The description you have given me of the vast forests your father owned and drove about in, as the English drive

through the enormous parks on their estates, makes the American lumber industry very unlike the soap or grocery business. It is in such vast solitudes, in such exquisite communion with nature, that your father has developed all the poetic side of his character that you tell me of. Money made in that way, owning woods and natural parks, is cleaner than anything I have ever heard of in the States. You may congratulate yourself, Maria. I have often said you were not at all like an American."

"I am not like a Cook's tourist, if you mean that," said Maria, bridling and pushing out her little thin chest as she glanced up at two coaches laden with American tourists on their way to Versailles. One coach stopped in the Place de la Concorde, and a young girl leaned forward and snapped her camera at the victoria.

"How American!" said the comtesse, thrusting her parasol between her face and Maria, to prevent any further outrage.

Maria said nothing. The victoria swept around the fountains and swung into the rue Royale. At the head of it rose the majestic columns of the Madeleine, its noble sweep of staircase black with people.

"What is going on in the Madeleine to-day?" asked Maria.

"The mass for the repose of the soul of the Marquis de Mores," answered the comtesse. "Shall we stop?"

"Do let us!" answered Maria.

They descended, and, entering the beautiful, cool, dim church, they took their places on the left of the central aisle, with the women. While the comtesse devoutly knelt, Maria watched the black-robed figures of the family on the front seats and thought with a sickening sense of impotence how little chance she stood of ever knowing the people who gathered here every year to do honor to the brave young explorer who was so foully murdered

in the flower of his manhood. It was a representative gathering of the nobility of France who knelt in the Madeleine that day, but Maria's mind dwelt more upon their social value than upon the fine and tender sentiment which would gather several hundred of the rank and fashion of the gayest capital in Europe to do honor to a hero's memory two years after his death in Africa.

The candles flickered, the black pall was spread, the choir chanted, the people knelt, and then silently left the church without recognizing each other.

Once on the steps, however, in the flood of Paris sunshine, the Paris spirit of irrepressible gayety burst forth. The comtesse was surrounded at once. She laughed and coquetted and chattered with one and all, ignoring the agonized appeal in the American's eyes, and frankly turning her back on the mistress of the victoria. But Maria was accustomed to not being introduced. She writhed inwardly, and in private shed many bitter tears over it, but she never dared mention it to the comtesse—which shows admirable control on both sides.

As they drove away, the comtesse turned suddenly to Maria, whose face was drawn and white with chagrin, and said :

" Maria, if Raoul could reach your father in America before he sails, I would not tell you of his hopes. But your news precipitates matters, and therefore I shall take the liberty of telling you that he is going to propose for your hand."

Every muscle in Maria's little thin body tightened, and her breath came through her set teeth with a hissing noise. She only turned dumbly to the comtesse, begging for reassurance for her doubting ears.

" It is quite true. His letters are filled with nothing else. Raoul wishes to marry you."

As they entered the shop of Falize, Maria still had said nothing. The son of the famous goldsmith came

out to meet them, and spread before them the designs of the communion set. The comtesse went into ecstasies over it. It was the third design he had made before her fastidious taste could be satisfied.

"And how much will this be?" she asked him.

"In silver, it would be about forty thousand francs."

"Forty thousand! *Mon Dieu!* Impossible!" cried the comtesse, flinging up her hands.

"But consider, comtesse," said M. Falize, "the work on it, the carving, the delicate tracery of these figures, this bas-relief. See, I wish to show you the *couronne* that M. le Président Faure has ordered for the tomb of the late Tzar. See this laurel wreath in pure gold. Is it not beautiful?"

"Ah, the noble simplicity of it!" cried the comtesse, clasping her hands. "The delicacy of feeling! It is worthy of you and of your father, M. Falize."

"Thank you, comtesse," said M. Falize, laying his hand upon his heart. The famous goldsmith was an artist, not merely a shopkeeper for jewels.

"But I cannot possibly have the communion set, much as I wish it," said she, letting her glance fall regretfully upon the beautiful designs.

In America, the goldsmith would have said:

"Then, in Heaven's name, madam, why have you kept us at work on these designs for three months, if you had no intention of ordering from them?"

Not so with M. Falize. They manage things differently in France.

The American moved forward and laid her hand on the designs.

"Do you care for these so especially?" she said, in a curious voice.

"Yes. I wanted to make an offering to the Church on the anniversary of Pierre's death," said the comtesse, with emotion.

Maria drew in her breath sharply, and her nostrils went white with dilation.

"How much would the set be, made of gold?" she inquired.

Falize dropped his eyes discreetly. The comtesse grew pale.

"About a hundred thousand francs, madame," he said.

"Make it in gold for the Comtesse de Brissy, and send the bill to me," she said, quietly.

Tears from some unknown emotion stood in the eyes of the comtesse, and for the first time in her life she kissed the American.

Maria felt that that kiss received her into the family d'Auteuil. And the twenty thousand dollars? Faugh! It was cheap at the price!

CHAPTER III

THE comtesse entered her salon that evening gowned richly in black chiffon and dull jet. The marquise looked up in surprise.

"Why have you dressed so elaborately, Eugénie? Do you go out?"

"No, maman; I am only dressing as becomes the sister of a millionaire!"

The marquise gripped the arms of her chair until the veins in her hands stood out like whip-cord. The full degradation of polluting the blood of the house d'Auteuil by an American marriage swept in a cold wave over the soul of the woman who had given up her life to an empty pride. But her composure was admirable and absolute.

"Ah, you told her, then?"

"I told her!"

"And she said— ?"

"She said nothing! Not one word! She only gasped and panted like one of the goldfish when I take it in my hand. And her mouth turned pale and her ears red, and she looked more ugly by far than I ever saw her. I could almost have taken back the words when I saw her."

"Ah, no! It means much to us that she brings a sublime fortune like that into the family. When did you tell her?"

"Just before we entered the shop of Falize."

"Eugénie! You have not allowed him to go on with those designs?"

"And *she* ordered the communion set for me—as a thank-offering, I think!"

"My daughter! The American ordered that beautiful silver communion set for us?"

"No, maman. She ordered it in gold!"

"In gold?"

"But yes!"

"And the price?"

"One hundred thousand francs!"

"One hundred thousand francs!" murmured the marquise. "Just the sum of Raoul's last loan from the Jew! Ah, thank God! We shall not be obliged to pay his debts much longer."

The butler appeared at the glass doors leading from the salon.

"Madame the marquise and madame the comtesse are served!" he announced.

They talked amiably upon indifferent subjects until the butler left the room, and then the comtesse said:

"I permitted her to tell me her news quite as if I did not already know of it."

"You mean that her family are coming over?"

"Yes. Are you sure we have not been precipitate, maman? Her ugliness fairly stops the heart-beats."

"My dear Eugénie! As if mere beauty made any difference when the possibility of selling Vrianault stares us in the face! And I am sure we have not been one moment too soon. She has no position here now, of course, living in your *entresol* with only a maid, and with no one knowing the exact figure of her father's wealth. But when once he comes over and sets up an establishment, and Sophie de Briancourt and Bébé and Élize de Fleury discover an heiress, they will all propose for her hand. They are all decidedly in arrears, and all have sons to marry. No, no! We are barely in time, that is all."

"I suppose you are right," murmured the comtesse. "Come, let us go into the salon for the coffee."

"We have dined later than usual," said the marquise, glancing at the gilt and porcelain clock on the mantel. "Did you go out again?"

"Yes, I went to our lawyer's, and got the duplicate copies of the leases of your hôtel, which I ordered made out last week. They are there on the table."

"Ah, you wished to read them over, I suppose," said the marquise, carelessly.

"I wished to be sure of their contents and to have them at hand, in case I need them suddenly," said the comtesse, narrowing her eyes at her mother shrewdly.

The marquise looked up uncomprehendingly, but, as Eugénie did not enlighten her, she said, reverting to their former topic:

"It is quite true that the girl is a fright, but Raoul has made up his mind to face the question like a man. Where is his letter? It amuses me to hear him discuss his future bride. Ah, there you have it. Read what he says about that odious America."

"How you detest America, maman! It is quite lovely to hear you."

"I know nothing of it!" cried the marquise, spreading out her hands. "I never was there, thank God. Only I have heard Sophie de Briancourt talk. She went to Chicago! Think of it! To Chicago! Where are my salts?"

"Raoul's letter is from Denver."

"And where is Denver, may I ask?" said the marquise, sniffing at her salts.

"It is far in the west of America. In the mountains, Raoul says. Stay, let me show it you on the map. When I received Raoul's letter, I got out the atlas that we used in the convent, and marked it by a cross of red ink. Here it is! Denver!"

The marquise adjusted her lorgnon and followed her daughter's finger-tip on the map.

"Ah, and what may be the name of those mountains?"

"The Rocky Mountains. Do you not remember, dear maman? They are the highest in the world, except—"

"American things are always the highest and the deepest and the richest and the grandest—"

"And the *newest*, maman. Never the oldest!" laughed the comtesse.

"True, Eugénie! You have a pretty wit. Read me Raoul's letter. But first give me a drop more of *fin champagne*. There, that will do. A drop too much is quite as bad as a drop too little. Now then, seat yourself comfortably, and then to the letter."

The comtesse crossed her fat, short feet upon a velvet cushion, and drew out her brother's letter:

"'MY DEAR MAMAN,—This is to be a long letter, for I have discovered all that I came to learn. But first, I must inquire about your health, the state of which has alarmed me, since hearing of how slowly our dear Duchesse de Briancourt is recovering from her terrible accident. It reminds me that one's mother needs tenderer care, for each year that passes over her head makes an illness a more serious matter.

"'Eugénie is a good nurse, and I am sure you are each receiving excellent care from the other, but, dear maman, pray take every precaution and save yourself in every way that is possible.'"

"It is nothing!" murmured the marquise, sipping her coffee contentedly. "But Raoul is such a charming boy!"

The comtesse smiled and continued:

"'I am nearly out of money, but I am sure you will

not object to that when I tell you that I have now reached the point where I am perfectly willing to accede to your demands and marry the American. I will confess that I never meant to do so when I started for America, for, if you will remember, I did not promise to marry Mlle. Hollenden, but *some* rich American, hoping (I will not deny it !) to find some one in the course of my travels who would not be an invitation to her husband to be unfaithful to her simply by permitting his gaze to rest upon her ! If I never had seen her, thought I, it would be easier. I would then allow maman to make all the arrangements, and, with Eugénie to dictate the settlements, it would then not be necessary for me to hasten my journeyings, for a few days of bouquets and state calls before the wedding would be all that would be necessary. I knew that no nightmare dream of her unattractiveness could conjure up the reality as I recall her during her three days' visit at Vrianault. *Mon Dieu !* Sometimes, when I have had too much wine, I dream that she has kissed me, because I was helpless !

" ' Consider, then, how I am keeping my word to you for your kindness in permitting me this journey, when I say that I will marry her. And now let me tell you why.

" ' You will remember that poor Mores had interests near here, and that I had letters to several of his friends. Through their courtesy I was at once put up at the Denver Club, which is my first experience of American club life, having come directly through from New York to Denver, where I heard my papa-in-law made his first fortune. This Denver club I like very much. The Americans all seem to drink for the effect, and thus do not know how to drink, according to French standards, but it must be admitted that their drinks are most agreeable concoctions, and that a European looks with envy upon their capacity to drink so many of them.

"'On the train coming from Chicago I found my first personal clew to the real wealth of my papa-in-law. Every one else to whom I had broached the subject declared him to be a Crœsus, too rich to tell of, and all similar exaggeration, which I had been warned in Paris not to believe. This young man, whose name is Brown, had been abroad and had spent some little time in Paris, where he became acquainted with the usual class of women affected by young Americans who go to Paris to "see life." He showed me a bundle of letters one of the creatures had written him, some of them quite old and worn with re-reading, and, leaning over very confidentially, he whispered in my ear that the woman was "a cocotte."

"'Dear maman and dear Eugénie! I beg of you to laugh aloud for me the laugh I was obliged to smother at that *naïve* confession! It seems to me that I can hear you at even this distance. The boy was a printer, it seems, and lives in Chicago. But to me he is the most useful creature in the world, and we have been inseparable for a week. I would consider him an ass if he were not more of a cad. I had no difficulty in persuading him to remain in Denver, for after he discovered that I was a d'Auteuil, and had a title at that, I could not escape him. He is rather clever, in his way, for I find that he knows all about our family, and therefore, thanks to his introductions, I am very much the rage in Denver, and am horribly run after by the women, one or two of whom do not bore me. But more of this later. To return to our mutton, as my future wife might most properly be called!

"'I find that this young Brown's father is a detective, or something of the sort, in Chicago, for all he has to do to discover the most private affairs of a man, from his *amours* to his wealth, is to ask his father, who has all this disgusting information at his tongue's end.'"

"Disgusting, but necessary," interrupted the marquise. "How excellently Raoul writes! One can quite see this objectionable pair."

"'He afterwards sent me—all neatly typewritten, if you please, on numbered sheets of paper!—this information. M. Hollenden's wealth is estimated conservatively at sixty millions of dollars, which would be three hundred millions of francs. This does not include his mines at Cripple Creek, one of which, the "Lonely Mollie," is now the sensation of the day. The newspapers are giving columns of space to it, and experts from far and near are rushing down there, but through it all my papa-in-law remains calmly in New York, sending his instructions by cipher telegrams.

"'There are two other children by a second wife—my Maria being the sole product by his first wife, a common Danish woman whom he married in his early days when he was only a miner working as a day-laborer in Nevada. He sent his wife to school after their marriage, and she learned to read and write English.

"'He subsequently lost, or thought he lost, everything in these mines, but not before giving his wife half of his stock in the "Lonely Mollie," which she refused to sell. It is quite possible, therefore, that Maria fell heir to this fortune, as it afterwards proved to be. When I see my papa-in-law, I shall make sure of this.

"'He then went to Michigan, where he engaged in the lumber trade, and amassed a small fortune. My Maria was therefore educated in a lumber camp in Michigan. Think of it! The future Marquise d'Auteuil! But think also of the three hundred millions!

"'Then the Dane died, and my Maria, having fought and scratched every companion she ever found as a child, her father sent her to Chicago. But her history there was one quarrel after another—all the result of the

most jealous and violent temper in the length and breadth of the land! Think of your poor Raoul with such a wild-cat for a wife! But, again, think of the three hundred millions!

"'She was finally sent abroad, owing to a fight of unusual violence over her father's second marriage—to a lady, this time. Then began twenty-two years of European travel for my Maria, in the course of which the little vampire fixed her fangs in dear Eugénie's throat. But Eugénie is clever, and soon turned the American's idolatry to account. My Maria is thirty-nine. Imagine your poor Raoul, who loves youth and the plump white roundness of youth, with a stringy wife thirteen years older than himself! It is horrible!

"'The second wife of my papa-in-law is also dead, thank God! which only leaves her two children, a lad just out of Yale, and a daughter, for the three hundred millions to be divided among.

"'But now to the reason for haste in the matter. They are all going to Paris to live. They are to start in two months or less. I shall sail on the same ship with them and thus become acquainted with papa. So propose for Maria's hand at once, for there are twenty men in Paris whose purses are as lean as ours, and who might please her better. Therefore, lose no time, but settle everything with Maria before they arrive. If her sympathies are engaged, we are safe, for they tell me her father is ridiculously afraid of her, and her will is law in the whole family.

"'It would surprise and disgust you to see how the women rule the men here. The husband and father is taken less account of than any other member of the family. Indeed, the American woman stands in far less awe of her husband than of her cook. The American woman is charming, but only in a way. She is cold, has none of what we call *tempérament*, and her vanity

is monstrous. Her manner with men I should characterize as impertinent. Her lack of warmth renders her as safe as if she were in an iron cage in the Zoo, and from her security she acts accordingly. Her eyes invite, her manner encourages, her words inflame—but let a man beware how he proceeds with her, for there is always the iron cage! If American girls carried out in their lives what their consummate coquetry suggests, they would be far and away the most fascinating women that any country ever produced. As it is, they are all intellect—that is, all vanity and curiosity. They permit a man to pay their cab-hire, to send them books, flowers, even gloves or more expensive presents if it can go as a wager; they lunch with him, walk and drive alone with him—in short, have all the charms and many of the vices of those of the little world. We are not so far wrong, we *boulevardiers*, when we call the American girl "*une demi-vierge.*"

"'So far, maman, I have spent the most of my time verifying this report of the Chicago detective, and three hundred millions of francs is a conservative estimate. Since the dividing up of the other two enormous fortunes in New York several years ago, and upon which we fixed our hopes in vain, M. Hollenden is easily the richest man in the States.

"'I am afraid that I have presented rather a gloomy view of the affair to you, my poor maman, but you must not let your sympathy for your boy overlook the fact that all our troubles will be at an end with this fortune ours. Nor need you be alarmed that my Maria's temper will last long after the marriage. There are ways of managing even wild-cats, if the male will be stronger than the female, and Vrianault has thick walls. She shall know what it is to have a French husband!

"'For another thing, she shall bear me children, and the name need not die out. American women are not

fond of children, chiefly, I think, because they lack in the essentials of *tempérament* and feeling. But, as I remember it, the little brown beast had a look in her eyes which made me think that her European training had done something for her in that line, or she may have inherited it from her foreign mother. Everything of that sort is very artificial in America. Nothing is natural or spontaneous. It is considered a degradation to feel such emotion. But, as for Maria, I remember her way of narrowing her eyes at me as one of the boldest and most suggestive things I ever have encountered.

" ' It is not her temper that I dread—no ! It is the little animal herself. Never shall I forget the first time I saw her at Vrianault ! Eugénie had, in her considerate way, warned me that she was ugly — " not pretty," Eugénie put it. Eugénie is always so kind. But when I saw her—a little beast not five feet tall, with brown claws for hands (consider, oh, consider her hands when compared to mine !), no stays on her miserable, shrunken figure, no bust, arms the size of a lamb's leg, a brown, stringy neck rising out of a white collar, a long face, prominent teeth, high cheek-bones, skin like leather, hollow, colorless eyes, great holes in her temples, showing age and illness, bushy hair, arranged badly, and this handful of bones got into a tight English tailor-gown, which is only made to set off the figure of a goddess—*mon Dieu !* maman, I would not dare be married in the Madeleine for fear the little monkey should be frightened and run up one of the columns !

" ' Therefore do not pity me too much, but attend well to the settlements and lose no time.

" ' Pray do not forget to give my most distinguished homages to the Duchesse de Briancourt, also to the Duchesse de Fleury and Duchesse de Trèves. I shall

bring them each a set of polished cow's horns from Chicago as a souvenir of America.

"'With all good wishes for the health of my dear little maman and dear Eugénie, I am

"'Your son, most devotedly,

"'RAOUL.

"'P. S.—Please send me more money at once, care First National Bank, Chicago, U. S. A.'"

"More money!" groaned the comtesse—"always more money with Raoul."

"But with such prospects, dear Eugénie! Surely you can get more from M. Silberman?"

Eugénie blushed.

"I suppose so," she said, frowning.

"Ah, *what* a delicious letter!" cried the marquise. "How like my boy to be so light-hearted in such a dilemma! But he always was a brave lad, and faced trouble—even danger—like a d'Auteuil!"

"Which do you call this American marriage, maman? Trouble or danger?"

"Both," said the marquise, haughtily.

CHAPTER IV

IT was just half after ten when Townshend seated himself at a table facing the door at Rector's. He had not been in Chicago for four years except to dash through in a hansom to catch a train, yet he knew that Rector's was the place to go after the theatre, if one wishes to see people, just as he knew every other Bohemian café both in America and the Continent, from the Café de Paris, in Paris, to Santi's in Cairo.

It was too early for the regular *habitués*, but every table except one or two undesirable ones was reserved for the knowing ones who love this little underground lobster cellar, where you can get the best shell-fish in town, and where your neighbors will be not less interesting than your crab salad or your Blue Points.

Townshend got himself out of his furred coat with one movement of the shoulders. It was like the *chuba* of a Russian, lined with sable, with a collar and deep cuffs of Russian beaver. The waiter who hung it up had in some mysterious way communicated its richness to the other waiters, so that three of them came to fill his glass with ice-water and to take his order. He knew that he was early, therefore he carefully ordered dishes which take a long time to prepare, and then, lighting his cigar, he leaned back and waited.

He was an unusual figure, even for Rector's, as he lolled in his corner and watched the glass doors. The March wind was searching, and the waiters came and adjusted screens around the tables nearest the doors.

One was between him and the next table, which was laid for six, with the chairs leaning their foreheads on the cloth to show that it was engaged.

Townshend sighed because he was tired. One always tries to do such a lot in one day in Chicago. His brain was more tired than his body, which is often the case with persons who are caught in that city's maelstrom. He had just come from his ranch in Arizona, where his cattle, although better cared for than any others in the State, still were suffering cruelly. He had been in the saddle sixteen hours a day for three weeks, with only occasional enforced rests, yet one day of dashing to and fro in Chicago had tired him more than all of that.

The wind and sun had tanned his face to a clean, even brown, from which his gray eyes looked with a curious contrast. He was smooth-shaven, with an excellent nose and a good chin, and he had a charming smile, which showed both rows of fine white teeth, so white as to make his face brilliant when he laughed. He was six feet one, and he stood as straight as Tommy Atkins on parade, with his thin flanks and deep chest and flat back making an excellent figure for any man who had not even his height to fall back on. He wore his clothes easily, and he looked as if he would be as much at home in leather breeches and a flannel shirt as in his evening clothes, which was quite true of him. Like most men who live in the open air, he had ideals, and high ones, of women. He was born in New York, but lived in Paris and Arizona, and spent a good deal of valuable time in getting from one living-place to the other ; but both seemed to foster, without satisfying, his ideal of what a woman should be. He wanted one so high and fine that she would be above all the little meannesses of her sex, and one with the courage to live up to her convictions ; and of course he had never found her.

The door opened now and then, and with a fearful draught men and women blew in and hunted up their tables and sat down and watched the door for others. The next time it opened, a very tall young woman and a man, half a head shorter, with a gentle, girlish face, came in, and the head waiter bounded to meet them. As he led the way to the table on the other side of Townshend's screen, Townshend saw a face that made him sit up. The way her hair grew about her temples and ears was enough to make her lovely, but then there were her eyes —so calm, so deep, with such an expression of courage in them, that one almost forgot the perfectness of her nose and mouth—the sort of nose and mouth which should always go with beautiful eyes, and so seldom does—except that one could never forget any part of a face which drew the heart almost out of the breast as Rose Hollenden's did.

Yet they were almost quarrelling as they sat down. The man had evidently been complaining of her.

"Everybody thought you were a prude," he said.

"Because I got up and left the theatre? Perhaps no one saw us. It left four others in the box."

"You seem to forget that people always watch you and criticise you unfavorably—"

"No one does that as much as you do, Ridley," said the girl's voice. "I didn't like the play. I hate things like that—it was vulgar and coarse, and I wanted a walk in the open air. You needn't have come with me if you hadn't wished to. One of the others—"

"But I always go where you go!"

"Dear old Ridley! So you do! Why is it, I wonder, when you never wholly approve of me, unless I am at a pink tea with your mamma! I wonder that you are in love with me. It is so evidently against your will."

"And I wonder that you are in love with *me!*"

"I'm not!" came the girl's voice, very promptly. "I have never said any more than that I loved you. There is all the difference in the world between that and being in love. I've often thought that falling in love, for me, would be very much like the dive that I make from the trapeze in the natatorium. If I were in love with you, I would be glad to die for you. But I'd think a long time before I'd die for you, dear—not that I don't love you, for I do. You're much more ladylike than I am. But you wouldn't die for me, either, so there's no harm done. I believe in your love, however. I believe that you would willingly get your feet wet for me."

"Why did you ever promise to marry me?" asked the man. "I've never understood it."

"Neither have I, in a way. I promised because you are nice and don't grate on me, and you are polite, and I like your clothes. Oh, Ridley, forgive me! I'll tell you why! It's because I am so lonely—so deadly, miserably alone in the world! I have no mother; I hardly ever see my father, except at dinners. I've never had a home. I've been brought up in other people's houses. I've seen girls unappreciative of the love I would have sold my soul for; and when I saw your home and your mother and father, and they were so good to me, and you loved me, of *course* I said I'd marry you! Who wouldn't? My only regret is that it isn't the big love, the great love I've always hungered to bestow and to have. I know that I am young yet, and I'm only half awake, and that I am capable of a love much deeper than I shall ever be able to give you. I feel that we are not suited to each other. You want me to change in the very things I *can't* change without killing myself. It's just as if you wanted my eyes to be black. I'd love to make them black to please you, but I can't. Neither can I be like the other girls you know. Nor can I help it that people always look at me and talk about me.

That sort of thing nearly kills you; you are conventionality personified, and I am constantly transgressing."

"But you do such outrageous things, Rose!"

"I know I do—from your point of view; but do you know what I'm afraid of? I'm afraid that some day, after I am safely married to you, and you are nagging my life out, that I shall meet the man, for I know he exists somewhere, who will think the very sins for which you lecture me, virtues; who will accept me wholly, imperfections and all; who will allow me to be myself, and find that self wholly good; who will foster the very side of me that you are trying to crush; who will think that when I do the thing, it becomes fine and good, because he knows and believes in the real me, and who will *never* consider my most generous actions 'bad form'!"

"What would you do if you did find him? Run away with him?"

"No; there would be nothing of me left for him to run away with. The mere knowing that I had found him too late—that I had wasted my life instead of living it—would kill me. Life means so much to me. Don't find fault with me so much. I warn you, I don't love you enough to stand it!"

"But how *can* I approve of such a thing as they say you did at the Camerons' ball?"

"Why, what did I do? Who says I did anything?"

"Half a dozen men saw it, and congratulated me on it—congratulated me on my mortification!"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"You know what I mean! No girl could do such a dreadful thing as to go to the rescue of an intoxicated man in public, and not have the memory of it flush her face with shame whenever she thought of it."

"You don't understand, Ridley. You were up-

stairs in the smoking-room, and you did not see. I can't regret what I did, even though you disapprove, for it was an act of kindness to a weak and unfortunate fellow-being, and I would blush to-day if I had not done it."

"He was simply drunk, and you offered to take him home—you, in your white satin ball-gown! It was disgusting!"

"Stop! Don't you dare say anything I do is disgusting. I admit that I was placed in a trying position, but he was *not* simply drunk—although if he *had* been, I would have done the same! But remember how ill he has been. It was the first time he had dared to go out, and the doctors warned him that they would not answer for his life if he drank a drop. It is his heart, you know, and he ought never to be excited. He was all right half an hour before, for I sat a dance out with him. But when he left me I saw him go to the champagne, and in a short time I saw him, quite overcome, sitting in the conservatory with three or four of his friends trying to persuade him to go home. You know he only lives three doors away from the Camerons. He was obstinate and refused. They tried to take him anyway, and he raised his voice and grew so excited that they were afraid of his heart and stood by quite helplessly. Well, then I saw that he knew me, and I went up to him. He tried to rise when I approached, but he staggered and I caught his arm and said, 'Stuart, won't you come with me?' And he said, 'Yes.' Then I said, 'You are not well, and you oughtn't to be out so late. I am going home and I'll walk with you to your door, if you'll come.' He said he would, and I took his arm and we went down to the door. Mr. Laurence got his coat and hat and I sent my maid for my wrap, when suddenly he seemed to understand, and he said, 'You are not ready to go home. I'm taking you away from

your dance. You are just doing this to get me home. I'll go. I'll go with Laurence. You stay and dance.' And so he went. That was all. It wasn't very much, *was* it ?"

" It was perfectly shocking. I shall never forget it. *You* offering to take a drunken man home !"

" Ridley, he was my brother's room-mate at Princeton, and he is only a young fellow ! Surely you wouldn't have had me do otherwise? I knew that he would go with me—he used to be rather fond of me—and his sister was liable to come down at any moment and see him. I was anxious to spare her pain, too."

" Why, I thought his sister was the one who was so rude to you at the Horse Show ?"

" She is ; but you don't suppose I want any revenge, do you ?"

" No ; but I certainly wouldn't go out of my way to do her a kindness, if I were you—especially by an action that no other nice girl could bring herself to do."

" You are unreasonable, and there is no use in discussing a thing with you, or even explaining it. The other men, his friends, didn't disapprove."

" No, that's part of the mortification of it ! I hate to find an act of yours approved so enthusiastically by such men."

" They are very nice men, *I* think !" laughed the girl. " Come, Ridley, you have scolded me quite enough for one night. Order the supper, for the others may come in at any moment."

Townshend's broiled lobster was stone cold, yet he let it lie before him untasted, while he listened to this conversation. They were conscious that possibly other people could hear, for it was Saturday night, and Saturday night at Rector's means that the tables almost touch each other.

Saturday night at Rector's in Chicago! There is no

other spot like it in the whole world. Men with their wives; well-chaperoned girls, fresh from a stage box; the very actors they have been laughing and weeping over; pretty women whom nobody knows; editors; society reporters; loud-voiced Jews at long tables, with their whole families—frowned at by all the others, but secure in the knowledge, as all Jews are, of the place to be and the place to eat; young men who never pay dinner calls nor return any woman's hospitality—social leeches, tolerated because one *must* have dancing men; quiet observers, who from a corner saw everything and said nothing; women whose clothes were distinctly to be looked at, and women who never knew when their hats were crooked—all these, and more, at Rector's on Saturday night! Townshend loved it, but he shrugged his shoulders and wondered how long it would be before the proprietor, inflated by its popularity, would spoil things by raising it to the level of the surface of the earth.

The voices at the table on the other side of the screen ceased temporarily. Townshend heard the girl smother a yawn.

Then the other four of their party came in, and Townshend recognized the Jasper Franklins, who pounced upon him with delight and made him leave his cold lobster and join them. He had no opportunity to speak with Miss Hollenden, except casually, for their table was the centre of attraction. All the men who wandered in and looked about, from table to table, to see who was there, stood, coats over their arms, to talk to the Franklins and to look at Rose Hollenden. The waiters could scarcely serve the tables beyond. Townshend was amazed at the unstudied frankness of the girl's manner. She seemed as unconscious of their admiration as of her own beauty.

Everybody and his favorite actor were there, and

there was much laughing and smoking, and talking and eating, but finally everybody left except the seven at this table, and it had got to be one o'clock.

Townshend and Rose Hollenden and her *fiancé* were the last to leave. The others went out five minutes before. When they went up the flight of steps and reached the street, they found a storm of sleet raging and their carriage not there. Not one was to be seen, except those which whirled by with a fare. Townshend dashed up the street to hunt one. Presently, however, a brougham drove up and stopped in front of Rector's, and a little woman, exquisitely dressed, lurched out, and Ridley sprang to help her. She laughed and clung to him, swaying back and forth. Rose walked up with an apprehensive manner, as if she feared what he would do.

"Is thish Rector's?" asked the woman.

"Yes."

"Well, lemme go. Thish is where he shaid to meet him."

"But it is too late," said Rose. "They are closing up. They won't let you in."

"Don't talk to her, Rose. Go inside and wait."

"Yes, go away and don't speak to *me!*" said the little woman, peering up into Rose's eyes.

"I wish to speak to you," said the girl, taking her hand. "Where are your gloves?"

"Losht 'em," said the little woman.

"Well, where do you want to go?"

"Rose, I insist that you do not enter into conversation with this creature," said her lover.

"And I insist that I shall find out what the poor little thing intends to do on this freezing night! Where is your money, dear?"

The little woman blinked her eyes feebly, and began to hunt for her purse.

"Dunno! Guessh it's lost. Had some when I started. Lost it."

"Well, where shall this man drive you? Where do you live?"

"Don't know."

"Ask the driver if he knows, Ridley."

"I will not. This is no affair of mine. Here comes Mr. Townshend, and I won't have him see you talking to her. I shall put her back in her carriage, and let her go wherever he takes her. You can't hurt a woman of this sort."

"Oh, Ridley, don't! She is so very little and so pretty! She is not fit to be left alone. See, she is so helpless. Don't do that. Please take her home, and let Mr. Townshend go with me."

"I will not," said Gould, indignantly, putting the little woman bodily into the brougham.

Rose hesitated a moment, then she put out her hand.

"Here is your ring, Ridley, for I know this is the end. I am going with her.—Drive away instantly, before that gentleman comes," she said to the coachman. "I'll give you your instructions in a few minutes," and Rose stepped into the carriage and drew the girl's head over on her shoulder.

When Townshend approached, Ridley Gould was staring at the ring in his hand, and the carriage was disappearing down the street.

"A cab will be here in a moment," he called out. "Has Miss Hollenden gone inside?"

"No," said Gould, furiously; "she has driven off alone, God knows where, with a drunken woman of the town, to house her for the night, and she gave me this!"

"Was she a common woman?" asked Townshend, grasping Gould's arm.

"No; she was only a little girl, very pretty and quite

helpless. Miss Hollenden can manage her, but *what* a thing to do! What an awful thing to do!"

"Here is the cab. Will you come? I'm going after them!"

"No!" cried the young man, angrily.

"Follow that carriage!" cried Townshend, slamming the doors.

In a moment Gould regretted his refusal. He ran up the street, shouting for a cab. When he found one, the other two were nowhere to be seen. He thought a moment and remembered that Rose had just given a large sum to the Young Women's Benevolent Association. He gave the driver that address, and the cab dashed away through the sleet and slush.

Townshend's cab soon caught up with the brougham. It stopped a moment as it turned north on Michigan Avenue, and Townshend heard Rose's voice say, "Tower Place."

The sleet dashed in his face and froze on the fur of his collar and put out his cigar, yet he never thought of having the glass down, but sat straining his eyes to see the brougham, and thinking with grim satisfaction of the ring Rose had given back to Ridley Gould before she had dared to shock his world in this grievous manner. He wondered, half fearfully, how she would come out of this. Would she weaken, or would she face it to the end? What was happening inside that little brougham, where such a drama was being enacted? At any rate, he set his teeth, and knew that no harm could come to her with himself so close at hand.

He stopped his cab at the corner of Tower Place and got out. Keeping in the shadow, he saw Rose leave the brougham at the door of No. 37. A light came faintly from the windows of the first apartment. Rose looked in and saw the frills of a woman's petticoat and a woman's slippered feet on the fender of the inner room. She

tapped softly on the window-pane, and the furious barking of a pet dog answered her. Then the woman came to the window and looked out with startled eyes. At the sound of Rose's voice she raised the window, and Rose said :

" Is Oscar at home ?"

" No. He will not come until Thursday."

" Then open the door, and don't waken the maids. I have a poor little creature in the carriage who is too far gone to be sent home alone. She isn't of the choicest, Marion, and I had to give Ridley his ring before I dared to come with her ; but I've brought her here for the night. Was I wrong ?"

" Wrong ? Just wait until I can open the door ! Hurry and bring her in. It is freezing cold."

Rose ran down and tried to lift the poor girl, but, small as she was, she was too heavy and too awkwardly placed to be stirred.

The coachman sprang down from the box.

" Do you mean to take her in, miss ?"

" Why, certainly, if I could only manage it."

" Take her into the house, miss, for the night ?"

" Of course."

He touched his cap, and, reaching in, he lifted the girl in his arms, carried her in and laid her on the couch. Marion began to undress her, while Rose ran back to pay the man. She took out her purse, but he waved her off.

" Do you think that English George would touch a penny of your money for this night's work, miss ? No, miss, and, what's more, you're welcome to the use of this cab whenever you've anything of the kind on hand. I've seen you before, if you'll excuse me for saying so. I used to be your aunt's coachman when you was a little thing. I'll come around in the morning and take her home for you. You'll not be wanting to use your own carriage for work of this kind. Good-night, miss."

As the door closed, Townshend signalled him and sprang upon the box beside him.

"Best go inside, sir. It's a bad night."

"No," said Townshend, "I like this. Stop at the corner and let me settle with my cab. Then we will fortify ourselves with something hot, before we drive back."

"Thank you, sir. You must be used to rough weather, if this seems like spring to you."

"Arizona," said Townshend.

"Just from Arizona! My mate, Jim Bobeen, is out there on a big ranch. And a better place he finds it than what he'd come to if it hadn't been for the master."

"Ah!"

"Yes, sir. He never done it, but they accused him of horse stealin'. And it seems they don't stop to ask questions at a time like that. A party was after him with a rope in their hands, when up rode a man on a fresh horse, and Jim panted out his story, and blest if the man didn't exchange horses with him and tell Jim to ride on to his ranch! Well, of course, when the lynchin' party came up, they found it was the owner of the biggest ranch in the State they'd been chasin', and they looked that silly you'd 'a' thought they were all girls. Well, after that you couldn't get Jim away from Townshend's ranch with a crowbar. He really never stole the horse. But they were goin' to make an example of him, because somebody else *had* been stealin' horses! Rum place, Arizona!"

"Rum place, indeed," said Townshend. "Rum world, all through."

"Right! This very night I've 'ad an experience not often to be found now, *I* can tell you."

"Ah!"

"Yes, sir! You'll never again catch English George a-sayin' that all women are down on the fallen. No, sir!

Did you ever 'ear of the 'Lonely Mollie' mine while you were in Arizona, sir? Well, the man as owns it used to live in Chicago. Right 'ere, sir. I've 'ad 'im in my cab many a time. But all 'is money ain't a patch on 'is daughter, neither for looks nor sperrits.

"She's 'ere now, visitin' her aunt in a fine 'ouse overlookin' Tower Place, but a hawful place for a young leddy with sperrits, for the aunt is hall for missionaries, sir. She must 'ave put flannels on a hawful number of naked savages, for she spends her life beggin' for 'em and goin' to prayer-meetin's to pray for more red flannel for the tropics. I used to be 'er coachman, so I know. Poor Miss Rose stays out at Fort Sheridan all she can—she comes of army people—but she 'as to show up for prayers now and then, or 'er aunt would be prayin' aloud for 'er in the middle of the church. I saw Miss Rose last Sunday mornin'. Her aunt was ill in bed, and she sent the young leddy off to church. But instead of goin', she orders her 'orse and takes her groom and 'er dog Peter, a fine German bloodhound, and goes for a canter. 'Ave you ever seen 'er on a 'orse? I wish you may some time, then. She's a rare one for looks, on or off. But on this partikaler Sunday I was waterin' my 'orse at a fountain in Lincoln Park, when up runs a little black kitten, chased by a French poodle. She was a lively little bunch of fur, for she led that poodle a merry chase. Everybody was lookin' on and laughin', when Miss Rose spied her. She jerked 'er 'orse's 'ead up and said something to 'er dog, and away went the big creature after the poodle, and the young leddy after them both. My two fares, who had been on a bit of a bat the night before, and who couldn't keep anything down unless it had burrs on it, leaned out and told me to follow. The bloodhound nipped the poodle just as 'e 'ad his paw on the kitten. The poodle yelped and limped away, and the kitten rolled over as if dead. Then the groom jumped

down to fetch the kitten to the young leddy, but she said no, and told the dog to fetch it. You'd 'a' died, sir, to see that great dog pick the kitten up as tender as a mother and stand up with 'is paws on the 'orse's neck and lay the kitten in Miss Rose's lap. The crowd cheered, they couldn't 'elp theirselves, and the young leddy's cheeks got red, and she rode off. The groom took something out of 'er 'and and snapped it on the dog's collar, and away 'e went, 'olding 'is 'ead as 'igh as a king."

"I hope her aunt didn't catch her," said Townshend.

"I 'ope so, too, for she's not like other young leddies. This very night she's done a thing that if people knew all the women would be 'oldin' their skirts away from 'er, and all the men would be hadmirin' 'er pluck. She found some fine gentleman's sweetheart too drunk to know where she lived, and she took 'er to a friend's 'ouse for the night. Took 'er right in, and I'll lay ten to one they're puttin' 'er in the best bed and treatin' 'er like Christians. Miss Rose's young gentleman was rare angry with 'er, but she took no horders from 'im. She got into this 'ere carriage and away we went. You was followin' us, sir. I saw you."

"Yes, I followed."

"You didn't know English George was hon the box, did you, sir?"

Townshend shook his head.

"Ha! The young leddy was as safe with me as she'd 'a' been with 'er nurse. She's a rare one. 'Ere we har' at your club. Thank you, sir."

"George," said Townshend, turning back. "If ever you need money, or a friend, will you write to your mate Jim to tell his master that English George is in trouble?"

"Ah! you know Mr. Townshend, sir?"

"Yes, I know him."

"He's a fine man, sir."

"I've known better. And I've seen worse."

"Would you mind tellin' me, sir, can he shoot as well as they say?"

"How well do they say he can shoot?"

"My mate Jim says 'e 'as seen 'im shoot from the back of a runnin' 'orse better than most men can shoot standin' still. 'E says the master can plug a shillin' at a mile, and I believe Jim thinks 'e could hit a dollar in the next State. 'E's considered the best shot in Arizona, sir."

Townshend laughed.

"Jim was lying to you," he said.

"'Ave you ever seen Mr. Townshend shoot, sir?"

"Often, and I've seen him miss."

"'*Ave* you now! Jim says he *never* misses. Perhaps you are a shot yourself, sir?"

"Perhaps."

"And would Mr. Townshend say no more for your shootin' than you will say for his?"

"I think he would say about the same thing," said Townshend.

English George touched his hat and climbed back on the box. As he gathered up the lines, he said, in a tone of respectful resentment.

"I've never known Jim Bobeen to lie, sir, and I don't believe 'e'd begin now about the master's shootin'!"

Townshend laughed.

"Don't be offended, George. I know Townshend well. It's true, he *can* shoot."

"Friends should stick by each other, sir, beggin' your pardon, 'specially be'ind their friends' backs."

"I know they should. I'll apologize to Townshend the first time I see him, for running down his shooting. But really, George, he can't shoot any better than I can."

English George gave Townshend a look of mingled contempt and disgust. It said plainly, "What boasting!"

"Then you must be a rare shot, sir!" was all he permitted himself to say.

"Good-night, George. Don't forget what I said!"

"Thank you, sir. I'll remember. Good-night, sir."

Inside the apartment in Tower Place, Rose and Mrs. Gregory were undressing the little creature and getting her to bed.

"How pretty she is! And how dainty, even in this condition. What round, babyish arms, and what a skin!" cried Rose.

"We will put her in my bed, and I will take Oscar's room."

"Why? Oscar's room is nearer."

"I have a fancy to see her in my bed," answered Marion.

Rose made no answer.

"And I wish to carry her myself. She is not heavy."

"You might let me help," said Rose.

"No, I want to see if I can."

There were two little brass beds standing side by side in Rose's room, and just as she was turning out the light her friend appeared at the door.

"May I sleep in one of these beds?" she whispered. "I can't sleep in Oscar's bed to-night."

"Why, certainly you may. I want to talk anyway."

"We shall be obliged to get up to go to her at some time during the night," said Marion. "She *is* pretty, isn't she?"

"Lovely! But you look so tired, I am afraid the excitement of it all is too much for you."

"No; I was glad, *glad* you brought her here. For she *is* so pretty—just like a charming, lovely baby. What hands and feet to be on a grown woman!"

"Oh, Marion, what a wonderful woman you are! Not one in ten thousand would have allowed me

to bring that little thing into her house. Do you know that you are all I have, now that I have lost Ridley?"

"How have you lost him? Was he jealous?"

"No! A thousand times no! He wouldn't be jealous of any flirtation, no matter how outrageous, provided the man were in his set, and no one could comment on me for it! He is more terribly afraid of Mrs. Grundy than any *woman* I know."

"Then why did he let you go?"

"Oh, he let me go easily enough. He would not fight to keep me. I saw a man to-night who—"

"Who what?"

"Nothing. He seemed like a *big* man, that is all. He made Ridley seem so small."

"What did he say?"

"Absolutely nothing. But I felt him. I believe that he could do things!"

"What is his name?"

"I don't know. But I believe that he has been everywhere and seen everything, and that he has come out of it—clean."

"You are young!" said Marion, tightening her hands in her lap.

"Where is Oscar?"

"In New York, I suppose. He is coming back on Thursday. When do you go?"

"Next week. And oh! except for you, I should be so glad to go, if only it were not that we are going to expatriate ourselves — for no reason at all! But, after all, why not? I am out of place here! Think what would happen if the people in that big, black house over there could see into this apartment! Think what Ridley's father and mother would say! Think what everybody would say!"

Marion laughed.

"Well, *we* know, and it is our secret. Would you

like me better, Rose, if I were smaller—about the size of that little creature in there ?"

" No, dear. I like you just as you are. I like your eyes, and your hair, and your coloring, and your strong points, and your weak ones. I want no change in you. I think a love which is always crying for a change in the beauty or character of a loved one is but a poor article. I love you for your very faults, if you must know the truth !"

Her friend smiled with tears in her eyes.

" There ! I heard her stir. I'll go to her," said Rose.

It was after five o'clock, yet the light was burning, and Rose found the girl sitting up in bed, gathering her hair up in both hands and staring at a picture on the wall with wild eyes.

" Shut the door," she whispered.

Rose closed it and came over to the bedside. The girl seized her hands and nestled close to her.

" Where am I ?" she whispered, " and who are you ?"

" I am Rose Hollenden. I found you last night outside of Rector's, shivering with cold, without any money, and not knowing where you lived, so I brought you here to a friend of mine, and we put you to bed."

" Who is that man ?" whispered the girl, pointing to the picture.

" That is the husband of my friend, Mr. Oscar Gregory."

" Am I in his house ?"

" Yes."

" Did his wife see me ?"

" Yes."

" Does she know my name ?"

" No."

" Help me to dress and get me away from here."

" Oh, not yet. It is still dark, and you couldn't stand even yet, I am afraid."

"Yes, I can. Give me something, can't you?—some coffee or anything. I *must* go! Did she help you to undress me?"

"Yes. But don't get up. You are dreaming. Lie down and try to sleep. Why do you do this way?"

"Did I say why I was at Rector's last night?"

"Yes, you said you were there to meet some man."

The girl looked around fearfully, to make sure no one was listening.

"Well, I was there to meet *him!*"

"To meet *Oscar?*"

"Yes."

"But he is in New York!"

A cunning look came into the girl's eyes.

"No, he is in my flat. My name is Lena Marot. He came back yesterday. He told *her* he couldn't get back until Thursday. We had a quarrel and he left me. I thought he might go to Rector's about midnight, and if I drove up and waited outside I might see him. But I went to supper first, and they put something in the champagne. I saw them do it. Then I forgot and drank it, and I don't remember anything more."

"Oh, how awful!" cried Rose.

"Hush! Don't let her come. Go in and see if she is asleep. Then come back and help me dress."

Rose tried to quiet her, but to no avail. Then she left her and went back to Marion. She found her sitting up in bed with a curious smile on her face.

"Is she awake?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you want coffee, I've started it in that German coffee-boiler. Let it boil a few minutes longer."

"She wants to go. Perhaps we'd better let her."

"Not yet. Have her wait until it is quite light."

"You are not coming in to see her, then?" asked Rose, fearfully.

"Not just yet," said Marion, smiling again.

Rose went back, and the girl clutched at her eagerly.

"She is not coming ?"

"No ; but why should you be afraid ? She does not know you."

"Oh, I know she doesn't ! But how could I face her ? Is this her bed ?"

"Yes."

The girl struggled to get out of it, but Rose prevented her.

"Lie still !" she commanded, "or I'll go and tell her !"

The girl gave one frightened glance upward into Rose's face, then she laid her lips against Rose's hand and kissed her fingers.

"Why did you bring me *here ?* Why didn't you take me to the Young Women's Benevolent Association ?"

"Oh, I never thought of such a thing !"

Rose sat on the bed, holding her hands and answering her eager questions until broad day.

Suddenly the girl sat up.

"Do you know what I'm going to do ? I'm going home—back to my father. You've broken my heart with your kindness. You don't preach, and you haven't asked me to reform, and you don't hold away from me, yet you are only a young girl who ought to be more particular. What you've done for me this night has done more good than anything else I've ever heard. I'll write to Oscar and tell him why. I'll tell him it is because I met two good women."

Rose bent down and kissed her. She did not even say she was glad, but the girl knew.

Marion brought the breakfast-tray while she was dressing, and the three sat together and ate their toast and talked. The girl's face cooled down, and she sat and listened humbly.

As the two watched her go down the steps and into

the street, Rose sighed. Marion turned, and, laying her hands upon her friend's shoulders, looked her directly in the eyes.

" Don't think I am a deceived wife," she said. " That is Lena Marot. I knew at once that hers was the face my husband wears in his watch where mine used to be. Through her we have each lost — you, your lover, and I my husband. At what a price is a soul saved !"

" There must always be the human sacrifice," answered Rose. " We have lost the men, but we have found—love."

CHAPTER V

ON the deck of the *St. Louis*, outward bound, stood a man and a woman looking down on the hundreds of people crowded on the New York pier.

It was past the hour to sail, but still luggage was being carried aboard, carriages were driving up bearing belated passengers, and sacks of the last mail were being passed over the narrow strip of green water which slopped between the black steamer and the slimy piles of the pier.

Porters, reporters, friends and enemies ran up and down the gang-plank like excited ants. The people on the pier looked up at the passengers on deck. Some looked relieved. Some men were sending their families abroad for a year. Some women were weeping. Their husbands were going on business. Families were being divided. Quite a number were in deep mourning. Those who could afford it were going to mourn abroad. Those who could not stood on the pier and faced a year of retirement from society. Perhaps they comforted themselves with the thought that they could learn French during that year.

Still others looked with frank envy upon the happy hundreds who, out of the unhappy seventy millions, were buying the inestimable privilege of leaving crudity and varnish and going among repose and ruins. They looked most of all at the tall young woman on the upper deck, whose eyes were fixed upon the land she was leaving with an eagerness to stamp even its unloveliest details

upon her memory. Everybody knew that she was going abroad to live. Everybody knew that her going took more millions of dollars out of America than she had lived years in her life. The young women, her friends, who had come down at the unheard-of hour of ten o'clock to see her safely on board, breathed a sigh of genuine relief at the knowledge that Rose Hollenden, with her big eyes and her millions, was going to take herself out of their way. She was really a nuisance, this "dear Rose" of theirs, but it was a matter of deep regret that Shirley, her brother, was going too. And even her father, although being so hopelessly Western as to be almost impossible, was worth considering. He was a widower, perhaps not too old to learn, nor yet too young to die, and his riches—they fell to calculating the chances for and against with all the keenness of a Wall Street broker. Shirley was the only "dead loss." He was in every way eligible. They wondered if, in order to get Rose out of their matrimonial path, it was worth while to lose Shirley.

But it was so romantic, the way in which Mr. Hollenden, after having permitted his children to be educated where they chose, often without seeing their father for years at a time, was now gathering them together. They were practically going to be introduced to each other, these sisters and brother, and to their father. He only knew their names, and how much each had cost him, because his books showed it. He was meeting unknown obstacles and curious conditions on all sides. His oldest daughter, the only child of his first wife (he colored whenever he thought of his first wife, who had cooked his meals before he married her in the mines of Nevada), this child of a Danish mother, having lived in Europe for twenty-two years, now calmly refused to come to America, so he had been forced to found this home abroad. Maria insisted upon Paris, and on the eve of

their sailing astonished everybody by cabling that she had rented an apartment in the rue de Chaillot. Rose stared and Shirley whistled, but Mr. Hollenden felt uneasy, and turned his neck many times as if his collar hurt him. He remembered what an ungovernable child Maria used to be. He wondered if, now that she was a woman of thirty-nine, she had outgrown certain traits which she seemed to have inherited from her low-born mother. He had so risen in the world that he could see now that his foreign wife had been low-born and in no way a match for him. He had yet to learn that his other children might possibly, upon a nearer acquaintance, come to consider him low-born. His ignorance of the unknown and explosive elements in the crucible he was compounding gave him momentary peace, and he was almost comforted when he thought with a glow of supreme satisfaction of his vast, his almost boundless wealth. Whatever there was, anywhere within the confines of the known earth, which was to be bought, he could buy. His check-book lay over his heart and fairly purred with content over its perfected foreign policy.

With Rose it was different. She loved America with a passion and a fervor which was a direct inheritance from her mother, who had died in Rose's infancy. The second Mrs. Hollenden had been an army girl, and had handed down to Rose her intense love of country, her love of freedom, and her artistic temperament. Rose had gone everywhere. She knew her own country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Seattle to Tampa, and she loved it with a love which few ever cared to understand.

This horrible new idea of going away from it forever, to live away from it, almost suffocated her. It seemed to her that she would only live to get back home. People looked at her pityingly when she said these things, and she resented their smiles of superiority. As they waved

their handkerchiefs and called to her, she looked down at them with feelings of anger and envy. She would have changed places with any of them.

The color came more and more into her face, and a lock of hair blew forward across her cheek. Her companion watched her in silence. Her lips moved.

"I beg your pardon," he said.

She started.

"I didn't know I was talking aloud. But I was thinking that those people are actually envying us."

"Why not, pray? We are going away from foul odors, from corruption, from newness, vulgarity; and *parvenus*, to the land of art, refinement, and culture. We are going to the only land in the world where they know how to live. Americans live always in to-morrow. The Frenchman lives in to-day. He fills the present hour. The American builds for the hour to come. The Frenchman's wealth is an accessory to him. The American is an accessory to his wealth."

"Ah, but we were born here. We are Americans. Why do *you* wish to live abroad, Mr. Townshend? What do we say of people who come here to live? We say 'What is their business?' And if they have none—" She paused.

"If they had none, we would think they were crazy."

She cast a look of irritation at him.

"But do you notice that we seldom, if ever, find English or French people of position or wealth living here who have no excuse of business or family ties for remaining, and who live here simply because they like America?"

"Well, why should they?"

"Exactly, why should they? Why should anybody live in America who could get away from it?"

"I hate to hear you speak in that way of my country, Mr. Townshend," said the girl, quietly.

"Your country. Have I, then, no part in it?"

"No one has who does not *love* it. Oh, see, there comes Shirley, and what is he doing? Why, the crowd will push Lida into the water!"

Near the entrance to the gang-plank stood Shirley Hollenden, a broad-shouldered athlete, got up in English tweeds. Behind him was a small, lithe American girl, of the nervous, vivacious type, who peered up at the big fellow from near-sighted, red-brown eyes. She chirped his name, and he turned with difficulty, considering the pressure from behind, and, taking her by the shoulders, he set her in front of him upon the gang-plank. She tossed her thanks to him, and sped up the narrow way without looking back. But as Shirley made way for her to pass him, a Frenchman, who had been crowding forward, hat in hand, bowing and saying "Pardon" at every step, but pushing women and children cruelly, stooped to slip under Shirley Hollenden's arm, and thus gain the gang-plank ahead of a white-capped nurse-maid leading a little child. The child screamed out that the man had stepped on her, the nurse was roughly jostled, and Shirley, with the blood pouring into his blond face, stooped and caught the little Frenchman and most ungently jerked him backward, flattening him out behind his big tweed shoulders while he allowed the woman and children to pass them both.

"Sack of paper!" shricked the Frenchman, with purple face. Shirley grinned at this fierce French oath, but held him back until he was ready to release him.

When the pressure from the crowd had somewhat lessened, Shirley withdrew his weight, and the bruised little Frenchman, screaming in falsetto French, hopped around like a nut on a hot shovel, much to the delight of the deck-hands and porters.

"Sack of paper! I will have your heart's blood for this insult!" he screamed. "I will give you a knock

that will send you into the water. I will fight you the moment the ship lands us. Why did you half kill me?"

"Because you crowded the women!" answered Shirley.

The Frenchman stared at being answered in his own language.

"But you did not know them! They were not friends of yours!"

"No, I didn't *know* them!" thundered Shirley. "But they were women, weren't they? And children, weren't they? And you trod on them, didn't you?"

"And what business was it of yours, may I ask? Are you a policeman? Where is your club? Where are your brass buttons? *Now*, will you fight me? Here is my card! Ah, *mon Dieu!* You tear it up! Sack of paper!"

"I only fight with gentlemen!" answered Shirley, tossing the fragments into the water.

"Good old Shirley! Stand up for yourself, old man!" cried a voice from the deck above. And another cried, "Bully for you, Hollenden!"

At the sound of his name the Frenchman's whole attitude changed. His face grew white and then fiery red. He backed away from Shirley, and then came towards him again.

"Is it that I address M. Hollenden?" he said, raising his hat. "Alas! how I regret my hasty words. Pray pardon me. I offer a thousand apologies. I have the honor of knowing your sister in Paris. Allow me to present my card. I hope you will not tear it up this time."

Shirley gave him a quizzical look, and, taking the card, read,

"Marquis d'Auteuil."

Then he shook hands with him reluctantly, and,

mounting the gang-plank, disappeared from the view of those on the deck above.

"Well," said Rose, drawing a long breath, "I am glad *that's* settled! But oh, see, we are off!"

There was no motion in the great ship to show that she had started. Only the restless moving to and fro of the passengers and the widening of the strip of green water.

The people on shore hurried to the end of the pier, shouting good-byes, waving handkerchiefs and throwing kisses to those on board.

There was no one on the pier whom Rose cared for. She knew how little their affection for her was worth, and yet, as their faces began to recede, she stretched out her hands to them with a sudden tightening of the heart.

"Good-bye! Good-bye!" she whispered. "Good-bye, dear country! *My* country! Good-bye, dear flag!"

She laid her face against her arm and burst into tears.

An artist from the *New York Hot Blast*, who was going back on the pilot, sketched her thus, and her friends sneered at the picture the following Sunday.

"Don't say good-bye to the flag as if you were never going to see it again," said Townshend, putting himself in the way of some people who tried to crowd past her. "Didn't you persuade your father to come by this line, because it is the only one which flies the Stars and Stripes, and sha'n't you sleep under its protection every night until we reach the land of the Union Jack?"

"Oh, but we are saying good-bye to it deliberately, without any excuse. I may never see America again."

"Nonsense," said the man, half roughly. "You wouldn't marry a foreigner, would you?"

"If I should, then I could get back to America occasionally," said the girl, smiling a little.

Her companion laughed.

"You have all the charming American girl's unconscious arrogance concerning her power over men. But your acquaintance with Europeans will give you a new point of view."

"You think, then, that if I married a European, I would never succeed in persuading him to live in America?"

"I doubt it, although, on my soul, he would have a hard heart who could resist you! But is that the aim of your existence?"

"The end of everything!"

"Alas! how differently you will feel when you have been over there three years! You should hear your sister talk."

"Ah, but she has been over there twenty-two years. She never has known a home in all that time. No wonder she likes it. Besides, if she hadn't liked it, she could have come back to America."

"She hates America, she says."

"How strange that you should know my sister so well, and I never have seen her."

"Oh, I don't know her very well. I meet her now and then travelling. I met her last year at Beyreuth, and the winter before that we were both in Egypt together. But we were at different hotels. She was at Ghezireh Palace and I was at Shepheards'. She wouldn't stay at Shepheards' because there were too many Americans there."

"Doesn't my sister like Americans, either?"

"She hates them, too, she says."

"Dear me, I wonder how she will like us. We are Americans. Is she like a foreigner in appearance?"

"No, and yet she is not like an American, either. She is very small—not over half your size, I should say."

He glanced into the eyes of the girl, which were almost on a level with his own.

"Oh, I am *too* big. Shirley says I ought to have been a boy."

"Shirley is a fine fellow, I hear. I haven't met him yet."

"I don't know him very well myself," confessed his sister. "We are such a queer family—all grown up, and yet strangers to each other. Tell me more about my sister. She belongs to a former generation, it seems to me."

"Heavens, don't let her discover that! She considers herself a *débutante!* She has the Continental idea that an unmarried woman dare not think before a man. She looks upon marriage as liberty."

"She isn't one of these afflictingly *young* persons, I hope!"

"I shall have to allow you to become acquainted with her for yourself."

"There must be something very odd about her, for every one tells me that. No one will ever talk of her to me—not even the people who knew her as a child. And those who have met her and known her very well abroad have the least to say of her. I suppose it is because they know her tastes, and they are sure that she will not like me."

"What is the matter? Why do you—?"

"It is that man over there. He stares so. Can't you stand in front of me?"

"I think that is the little Frenchman that Shirley nearly squeezed to death a few moments ago. He looks rather flattened out."

The Frenchman, having watched Rose until she vanished from view behind a stupid American who evidently was monopolizing her, sought Shirley Hollenden in the smoking-room.

"Excuse me, M. Hollenden," he said.

Shirley got to his feet with visible reluctance.

"Your sister is on board, is she not?"

"Yes."

"She is very tall and very beautiful?" persisted the marquis.

"She is not repulsive to the eye," said her brother.

"Excuse me if I ask one more question. She is on the upper deck with a tall American gentleman, M. Townshend?"

"I believe so."

"Ah, thank you!"

The marquis grasped Shirley's hand with effusion and hurried away.

He passed through the saloon, the long tables of which were crowded with gorgeous flowers and fruits of every description. Eager passengers crowded around to read the names on the cards. The most of the flowers were American Beauty roses. They were in long white boxes, with their stems protruding through holes cut in the ends of the boxes. They were in huge bouquets tied with long satin ribbons. They were in pyramids, whose height reached up five feet. The marquis had never seen such roses, nor imagined them, nor do they grow anywhere else in the world, with such stems and such color and such fragrance.

As he passed he heard one woman say:

"All of these American Beauties, except one box, are for Miss Rose Hollenden."

He paused to assure himself of the truth of this remark. He had been warned in Paris not to take anything for granted. Then he hurried to his man.

"Find out from the deck steward the name of that beautiful young girl there in the cream-colored gown."

In a quarter of an hour the man came back.

"Mademoiselle Hollenden, of enormous wealth. She and her father and brother are on board and occupy six deck state-rooms."

"Very good. Take this telegram and send it back by the pilot. Send it to my sister in Paris at once."

CHAPTER VI

ALL the women were sea-sick on the second day out from New York, with the exception of Rose Hollenden and one small, thin girl, who fought against the wind and paced the slippery deck on the lee side, clad in a brown storm-coat and a smart little scarlet hat.

The men watched her pluck admiringly, several secretly wishing to walk with her, not so much because of her beauty as because her warm hat made a charming spot of color against the leaden day. Once or twice the wind nearly swept her off her feet, but she slid along the wet deck to the gunwale and clung to it laughingly until the ship righted herself, when the girl ploughed forward again like a brave little yacht sailing against the wind.

Suddenly the ship listed, and, taking the girl unawares, she fell. Instantly two men sprang to her rescue and lifted her. They all three clung together for a moment before they could gain their balance.

Laughing, in spite of the awkwardness of the situation, the girl cried :

" You are dying to say, '*Now,* will you be good?' only you don't dare, because you think you don't know me, but you do. I am Lida Schermerhorn, and you are Sterling Townshend, and we met two years ago at your cousin's, Baronne Valencia's, in Paris."

The wind took her breath away at this juncture, and she put her head behind Townshend's tweed shoulder and went on :

" Don't let go of me, either of you, whatever you do, for my ankle feels uncommonly queer and shaky."

" Are you hurt ? Have you sprained it ?" they both asked.

" No, I think not. Could you get me to that steamer-chair, do you think ?"

" We can try," they answered.

Twice they essayed to ascend the slippery incline, but twice they slid back again, and the girl's face twisted with pain.

Townshend saw it, and without more ado he picked her up like the child that she seemed and deposited her in the steamer-chair.

" How fine !" she cried. " How strong you are ! I owe you a thousand thanks."

" That must have been a nasty turn you gave your ankle," said Carteret. " Your lips have gone quite white. Shall I get you some wine ?"

" No, indeed. It feels heaps better already. I don't believe it is sprained. I think it was just one of those convenient turns ordained by an over-ruling Providence to deliver you into my keeping. I shall treasure its memory."

Both men laughed. She looked like a pert little sparrow, as she huddled in the big steamer-chair and peered up at them from her red-brown eyes.

" I never would have known you," said Townshend. " What have you been doing with yourself ?"

She looked surprised.

" Where have you been for two years ?" she asked.

" In Paris. I never go back to America except for a month now and then at the ranch."

" Then you don't know that we lost all our money, and that if it were not for my trade, I would be going round to your mother's back door with a gray shawl over my head, begging for food ?"

"But—but your relatives—your sister, Mrs. Stockton—" stammered Townshend.

The other man—the man who had not been presented, Sir Arthur Carteret, stood by, held by the command in her manner which would not release him. Her absolute self-control and gay comradeship always made men feel at ease in her presence. He even knew that she did not object to his hearing her pick up the dropped stitches in her history for Townshend.

"Pooh! Would you have me a genteel pauper?" she demanded, as though they owned some stock in her government, and had a right to dictate. "I earn my own living, and have done it for two years."

"What's your specialty?" asked Townshend, laughing.

"What did you first notice about me when I came on deck to-day?" she demanded.

"Your hat," said both men, in a breath.

She laughed and clapped her hands.

"Exactly! That's my 'specialty'—hats! I've always loved them. I've always known how and when and where to wear hats, from some occult spring of knowledge situated in the innermost recesses of my soul. Some people keep their religion there. I don't. I keep my wisdom in hats in that sacred temple. I believe, without boasting, that I know by intuition more about hats, and which will suit certain faces, than any woman in New York. My own are always loves, and so when I had to have money I sold my knowledge, of how not to let beautiful women look hideous in expensive hats, to the highest bidder. There you are—Miss Lida Schermerhorn, ex-heiress, at your service!"

"By Jove! Carteret, you can't beat that in old England, can you?"

"Is his name Carteret?" asked the girl, surveying him from her near-sighted eyes through her lorgnon. "You forgot to mention it?"

Her impertinence struck Carteret as delicious.

"I beg pardon, Miss Scher—"

"Stop," she said. "You were going to spoil things. I don't want him introduced. He is an Englishman, and I shall shock him by being the very sort of an American girl he thinks we all are. I began the acquaintance by sliding almost into his arms. Don't spoil things by an introduction at this late day."

"I am an Englishman," said Carteret, "only I am not living in England now."

"Where do you live now?" she demanded.

"In Paris."

"Expatriates — both of you!" she said, scornfully, turning her glasses on them.

"But he is the First Secretary of the English Legation," said Townshend.

"Oh, *then* I forgive him!" said Miss Schermerhorn, laughing.

"To return to hats—is there really such a science in knowing about them?"

"Science? No! It's a fine art! It comes next to music and painting. It comes in before sculpture and architecture! At school I always used to select the girls' hats for them. Take even that lovely creature over there in that steamer-chair, Rose Hollenden, I've bought her hats for her—selected them, I mean—ever since she came to New York. She used to wear frights. She got them in Salt Lake or Denver or Chicago, and paid fearful prices for them, and never knew how well she could look until I began to dress her. Then suddenly, from a girl with only big eyes and no waist, she found herself, inside of a year, a Beauty, with a figure which makes a tailor-gown squeak with delight to be worn by her, and a face (under my hats!) which makes half the women and all the men turn to look after her as she walks. Such a figure! Oh, if only I were a beauty

how I *would* dress ! I'd have all the men loving me and all the women hating me ! Rose doesn't make half of her opportunities that I would in her place."

" There seems to be something about her—something special—" began Townshend.

Miss Schermerhorn interrupted him.

" That's it exactly ! She isn't like any of us. You ought to have seen her advent into Miss Van Schaak's school. She was from the West and she was said to be so rich that her millions were simply uncountable. We all resolved to hate her. We meant to be so mean to her that she would leave. We drove one Chicago girl home that way once, but afterwards we were sorry, because she married an English lord and snubbed my sister and me publicly in London, when we would have knelt at her feet to have her recognize us. The way she did it was perfectly superb. Somebody said, ' Miss Schermerhorn, doubtless you know your charming compatriot, Lady Hurlinghame. She can do everything for you that any young lady need wish in London society.' Well, with that she put up her lorgnon and gave me one straight look, which reminded me of every mean thing we ever did to run her out of Miss Van Schaak's, and then she said, ' So glad to meet you, Miss Scuppernong. Are you from the West ? Excuse me, Lady Dacier, you surely are coming to me on the 10th. You know the prince will be there. You won't forget ?' And with that she nodded to me over her shoulder and left me with my mouth open ! It was so superb of her that I burst out laughing. That's the way she got even with us ! But I've told you the end of that before I commenced on Rose. When Rose arrived she boarded in the school. She fitted up her rooms without saying a word to any of us. She wasn't vulgar nor pushing nor loud-voiced. She simply stared at us out of those big eyes of hers as though she found us funny. She never boasted, and

we even had to discover for ourselves that Shirley Hollenden was her brother! What do you think of that?"

"Well, what in the world is there to Shirley Hollenden to make every one speak of him with such awe?"

"Shirley Hollenden! The captain of the Princeton football team—the man who—"

"Oh! 'Luff' Hollenden! Is he her brother? I know *him*," said Carteret.

"Why, so do I," said Townshend, recollecting. "I had forgotten what a little tin god he was in the States."

"Little tin god! He's a glorious golden angel! If I were his sister, I'd wear placards plastered over me announcing the fact. I'd be like a London sandwich-man. I'd ring a bell! You know he is the man who saved the day for Princeton when they played against Yale, by—"

"So he did! I remember how—" said Carteret.

"The way he started in! Nobody ever thought—" interrupted Townshend. "And the idea of daring to—"

"At first nobody could see that he meant to—"

"And then the impudence of—"

"It simply paralyzed Yale for a minute and—"

"Then do you remember what a yell went up?" cried the girl.

"I wasn't there," confessed Carteret. "But my sister—"

"But I was," said Townshend, "and I remember that yell."

"It was awful! It sounded as if Princeton yelled from paradise and Yale from purgatory. I was deaf all the rest of the day, although at the time I shrieked myself hoarse, and ruined my best hat pounding it on my brother-in-law's back."

"It was the same sort of dare-devil thing that he did when he was sailing his yacht, when—"

"When he made that pilot's luff that won him the race!" cried Lida, with an enthusiastic little bounce in

her steamer-chair that twisted her face again with pain. But she went on hastily. "No matter! It was nothing! I was on the pier when he did it—right on the very end of it, leaning away over, with some girls holding me on by my sash. He had Rose with him—she can sail that yacht as well as he can—and when I saw them coming, why, it looked to me as if there wasn't room for a greyhound to squeeze through—but I caught Shirley's eye, and it had the queerest, steel-blue, *set* look in it, and he sort of braced himself, and gave an order to Rose, and she hauled in a rope, and the *Now Then* flew into that narrow strip, and I shrieked, and Shirley laughed, but he made it! The yacht cut off a good quarter of a mile by that luff and *won!* Won by the most reckless sailing I *ever* saw! I have bad dreams once in a while, and always dream that the *Now Then* is making for that narrow strip and that she runs into the pier, and then I 'scrooch,' as the children say, and wake up in the wildest excitement."

"How crazy you are over sports!" laughed Townshend.

"So would you be, if you could see Shirley at them!" she laughed, with a defiant little tilt of her chin. "He is the best ever!"

"How amusing college slang sounds!" said Townshend. "The French miss a good deal, after all, by speaking a pure language."

"Ah, but there is in Paris quite a little vernacular which corresponds well enough."

"It is not universal, however, as ours is."

"No, but it is killing when you do hear it. In the shops—the smart shops where I have to do all my buying—they are secretly very scornful of Americans, so I always pretend that I do not speak French, so that I can treasure up their impudence. And so one day I was giving orders for a number of changes to be made

in their models, for the Americans won't wear their worst absurdities, when the forewoman said, '*Mais elle a du chien pour une Américaine!*'"

"Ah, but I like them," said Townshend. "I like their very scorn of us. They amuse me. They are so childlike, so dramatic over trifles, so courteous."

"So childish, you mean! So theatrical, not dramatic; and they are truly courteous only to each other! Now take England—there is a dramatic country, if you like. There are no sky-rockets there."

"Thank you," said the Englishman, coloring like a girl at the little American's praise of his country. "I thought America was not particularly fond of England, from what I heard."

"Oh, we don't understand each other, that is all. You hate our expansiveness, and we hate your reserve. We say you are stupid and can't see a joke, and you say our sense of humor is aggressive, and you find our constant jesting irritating. But, after all, we are akin, and just let some big common danger stare us in the face, and you would see that blood is thicker than water, and we English-speakers would stand by each other!"

"Some of us have been thinking that in England for some years, but it is not a popular sentiment in America, except among the cultivated, I find. I am glad to hear it from *you*, however."

"Oh, *I* don't count! I simply talk things over, mostly with Rose Hollenden, whose ancestors were English, and who first put it into my head to figure out what I did think! You see, mine has been the experience and Rose's the thought. Rose is one of the few women who can profit by vicarious experience. She is always digging at people to find out what they have *done*. That is atavism in Rose—a trait from her far-off English ancestors, who believed in deeds. Rose's ideal is achievement. She adores Cecil Rhodes, and she has her eye

on Kitchener. She says she believes that he will explode some time and blow England clear through the Soudan."

The two men looked at each other over Miss Schermerhorn's head, and then fixed their eyes on Rose's steamer-chair.

" Isn't it rather unusual for a young woman to take such an interest in—er—such things ?" asked Carteret.

Lida shook her head vehemently.

" Not for Rose. She is the only girl I ever knew in my life who was really educated, and yet she never went to school more than two or three years in her life. She comes of army people—her mother, I mean, for her father never has counted any in her life, and certainly never in her education, although he is not particularly discreditable, only hopelessly *Western*, but Rose's grandfather was Colonel Emory Hope, and her two uncles and her great-grandfather, and so on, clear back to nowhere, were all famous officers, as Rose says, ' for achievement.' Rose really ought to have been a man. She would have been as fine as Shirley, and as brave. She says, after all, that Trilby's code was a good one, ' Never to tell a lie, and never to be afraid.' We women are all rather mean at bottom. I know *I* am."

Carteret laughed in an embarrassed way. This astonishing American frankness disconcerted him. Townshend looked again at Rose. Shirley was sitting beside her and holding her rugs in place.

" I don't know that this will touch you as it did me," Lida went on, " but the key-note to Rose's inheritance is her patriotism. She told me that her mother was the only girl in their family for three generations—all the children had been boys, all had been in the army, and all killed in battle. And she said her mother's one wish was to be buried wrapped in the flag, as they were. And so they carried out her wish. Does that touch you ?"

"It gives me a better idea of why Miss Hollenden's patriotism goes so deep," answered Townshend.

"Deep!" answered Lida Schermerhorn. "It goes from ancestry back to atavism, and from atavism to protoplasm, and has its cube root in infinity—*that's* where it springs from!"

Townshend and Carteret bowed as the Frenchman passed the little party of three.

"Who is that? *Do* tell me!" said Miss Schermerhorn.

"That is the Marquis d'Auteuil—the man you nearly put an end to yesterday."

"It wasn't *my* fault," answered Miss Schermerhorn, imperturbably. "I have my eye on him, and I want you to present him to me the first opportunity you have. I'll tell you why later."

"But I don't know him," said Townshend. Townshend's manner told the other man that he knew him too well.

"Then get acquainted with him! In the smoking-room it will be easy."

"Why don't you ask Shirley? He knows him."

"I don't want to ask Shirley. I have asked you."

"Oh, I'll do it! Shall I go now?"

"Yes, if you will first take me over to Rose, or tell Shirley to come here."

"You can't walk. Will you let me carry you?"

"Oh no. With all these old Tabbies on board?"

"I don't see any Tabbies out to-day," said Townshend.

"Do you see that row of fat men between Rose's chair and mine? Well, those are the husbands of the Tabbies, and, on shipboard, what one knows the other does."

"You are a very clever young woman," said Townshend.

"I haven't crossed the ocean sixteen times for nothing," answered the girl, beckoning to Shirley.

He left his sister instantly and came over.

"Shirley, I've twisted my ankle—"

"Again?" said Shirley, with a look of concern.

"Yes, wasn't it stupid of me! But Mr. Townshend and Sir Arthur got me to this chair, and now I want to see Rose."

"Well, Rose was just asking for you, as I have promised to play cards with your Frenchman. Townshend, won't you and Carteret join us?"

"Certainly they will," said Miss Schermerhorn. "They were just dying for an excuse to smoke."

"Now then, little person, which foot is it?" said Shirley. "Hold still, I'm going to carry you. It will be easier that way."

"Oh *no*, Shirley! What do you suppose—wait, you'll break my glasses! No, Shirley, really, I am in earnest! What do you think people—well, *good-bye*, Mr. Townshend!"

CHAPTER VII

MR. HOLLENDEN was smoking and talking to Captain Corcoran, the new United States Military Attaché at Paris, who was going over to have a week in London before his chief arrived, when Townshend and Carteret entered, closely followed by Shirley and the Marquis d'Auteuil.

The marquis laid his hand on Shirley's arm.

"Will you present me to your father?"

Shirley complied, and Mr. Hollenden received the introduction seated. He held out his hand, however, and the marquis grasped it cordially.

Mr. Hollenden was a short, globular person, with white hair, a red face, and no eyebrows nor eyelashes to speak of. He wore gold-rimmed eye-glasses, which he continually removed from his nose in order to tap them upon his waistcoat.

"Sit down! Sit down, gentlemen! Waiter, take these gentlemen's orders! What are you going to have, captain?"

"I think I shall have another Scotch high-ball."

"And you, Carteret?"

"Brandy and soda, please."

"And you, marquis?"

"A little absinthe, if you please."

"And you, Townshend?"

"A Plymouth gin-sour."

"Nothing better as an appetizer! And you, Shirley?"

"Dry Martini cocktail, father, with an olive in it."

"Vile things, cocktails, but I think I'll have a Manhattan myself, as dinner is not far off."

The Frenchman listened in amazement to these orders. He had seen these Americans order and drink a similar assortment all day long, and all yesterday. They in turn looked upon his meek little absinthe with something like horror. When a man drinks absinthe, even once a day regularly, most Americans think that he has arrived at the jumping-off place.

"So you know my daughter," said Mr. Hollenden, lighting a fresh cigar with the match the marquis held for him. He noticed the little attention, and saw instantly from his Western point of view, sharpened by the knowledge that he was not like the men and women his children knew, that these trifles went to make up the polished whole that Maria was always writing about. He was torn between his genuine Western idea that courtesy between men was effeminate and his tremendous respect for Maria's titled friends. But he had also a wholesome fear of the French as a nation, and he had caused Maria to be shadowed by a series of watchful duennas, who stood her insane temper as long as they could, and then fled in disorder, tempted by no salary, no persuasions, to bear her petty meannesses with money, and her ungoverned nature.

Mr. Hollenden had never allowed Maria to know how his wealth was increasing. He never knew what she would do. He feared her as if she were a partially tamed panther, who ought to be in a cage, and yet who was allowed to roam the house, held only by a slender chain, in which he had no particular faith. Her bitter quarrels with all his friends had driven him from his home, and now her imperious will was asserted to bring him to Europe. Her letters had been subtly poisoning him for years. They were filled with suggestions and com-

parisons between France and America. His old friends were caricatured, and sketches made of the new ones she was making — particularly, he remembered, with crazed descriptions of the family whose son was now before him. His instincts were so sure in business that this social uncertainty worried him sadly. He resolved to understand things, if possible, and to get at the differences whose shadowy shapes eluded him so bafflingly.

" And how do you like America ?"

The marquis sighed patiently. He had answered this question many hundreds of times. It seemed the *open sesame* to all conversations in America. He was positive that not a man or woman whom he had met had omitted to ask it at least once, and some asked it every time they saw him. By sad experience he had learned not to criticise it unfavorably.

" It is a wonderful country—" he began, as usual, but Mr. Hollenden interrupted him.

" I don't mean that. I mean, how do you find us as a nation differing from yours ?"

As the marquis looked at the successful American before him, who sat tapping the third button of his waistcoat with his gold-rimmed eye-glasses, something gave the Frenchman the idea that he might be allowed to answer the question honestly. It is a rare privilege for a foreigner, as thousands of unhappy Englishmen can bear witness.

" You wish me to speak of social matters ?"

" Quite so."

The man came with the drinks just then, and for a moment all were busy trying them. Mr. Hollenden left his standing, and leaned back in his chair, blowing clouds of smoke into the air.

" Well, society means women, and it is in the women that I find the greatest difference."

" And an American woman in Paris finds the greatest

difference in the men," said Captain Corcoran, who had been in the diplomatic service before.

"I dare say," said the marquis. "But here, *mon Dieu!* What surprises! To be sure, I had been told by my friends who had been over here, and I believed them at the time. But it was impossible to act upon their advice. It upset the experience of a lifetime."

"So you came a cropper, did you?" asked Shirley, with a grin.

"Oh, many of them. The worst one was in Denver. Imagine it! I was invited to spend a week with a gentleman who had been a warm friend of the Marquis de Mores, and who had a very pretty daughter. One evening she suggested that we go to the theatre. I acquiesced, and, to my horror, I found that we were to go alone. I spoke to her father, but he did not seem to understand. He said, 'Oh, that's all right. Mary will put you through.' Then it was my turn not to understand. I did not know what Mary would put me through. I was soon destined to know. To my further embarrassment, I found that we were to go in her father's brougham. She got in without any hesitation, I followed, the door slammed, it was quite dark, there we were!"

"Well?" said Mr. Hollenden.

"Well. It was dark. Of course—no man could resist it—I kissed her! And she—what do you think she did! She slapped me in the face with her bare hand. Slapped my face, gentlemen! What do you think of that?"

Mr. Hollenden roared. The other men only smiled. They realized how easily the girl had got off.

"Didn't she say anything?"

"Yes; she said she'd teach me how to treat a lady."

"Oh, my God!" cried Captain Corcoran.

"That's like a Denver girl," said Mr. Hollenden, remembering episodes in his early days there.

" The most surprising thing about it was that she had flirted most outrageously with me before that. What could she have expected a man to do ?"

" How, flirted ?" asked Townshend.

" She had lunched with me, had allowed me to go shopping with her ; I had bought that vile stuff to drink—how do you call him ?—soda-water, with ice-cream in it. *Mon Dieu !* she could drink quarts of it ! We had played tennis together ; but, more than all, it was her gay talk, the look in her eyes, her free manner, at once an invitation and a challenge. I could not believe that I was not with my little friend in Paris—my Lili—except that I kept repeating to myself, ' But she is not. You are speaking English. There are not the Boulevards. She is not Lili. She is an American girl.' But, after all, she had not any of what we call *tempérament*, and her rebuff was quite sincere. I was disappointed. But your married women are worse."

" How, worse ?" asked Mr. Hollenden.

" They are quite as difficult as the young girls. It is impossible to succeed with them. I suppose it is because, with you, marriages are of inclination. In my country it is different."

" Very different," said Captain Corcoran.

" Suppose a fine young Russian, let us say, should go to Paris with letters, and should take a fancy to a young French girl. What then ?" said Mr. Hollenden.

" Her people would see to it that he proposed marriage before she ever saw him alone for one moment."

" But suppose an accident happened that no one intended, and they *were* alone, then what ?"

The marquis shrugged his shoulders.

" I cannot say. Either marriage afterwards or a duel. In any case, disgrace for the young girl."

" Then if he had allowed himself to become interested in a married woman ?"

"Ah, *that* would be plain sailing! She would be clever."

"Is cleverness everything?"

"No, one must love. But with us love is cultivated. It is in the blood. It is in the air. It is our inheritance for hundreds of years. It is given to our women as well as to us. Sometimes they fight against it for a time, but end by being unfaithful to their husbands. Sometimes they have widowhood for an excuse. Sometimes they yield and live!"

"And he calls it love," said Shirley to Carteret, in an undertone.

The marquis caught the last word.

"Love? Ah, yes! It must be love. Love excuses everything. And everything is forgiven except stupidity. That is Paris."

He remembered that he was speaking to Americans.

"But of course Paris is not France, and Parisians are not the French nation. In our small towns and the provinces we have the *bourgeoisie*, the bone and the sinew of the nation, who often marry from inclination, and where the wives are faithful to their husbands."

"How about the husbands being faithful to their wives?"

"Sometimes even *that* is the case. I have heard of instances."

Townshend looked at Mr. Hollenden's embarrassed face and smiled.

"Everything depends upon the point of view," said Captain Corcoran. "But it takes Americans forever to learn that. They never do learn it, in fact. It is only to be learned in the Faubourg St.-Germain. Americans can only really penetrate there by marriage, and even then they are never received into the 'Holy of Holies.' There are Star Chamber Sessions held right under their very eyes, and yet they cannot see it. They can only feel

it, perhaps. But the fashionable Faubourgs say to an American, 'Between me and thee, there is a great gulf fixed.'"

"Nonsense!" said Townshend. "Nonsense!"

The marquis half-way closed his eyes and sipped his absinthe to hide a queer little smile which sent the ends of his mustache upwards.

Mr. Hollenden saw it, and in turn retired behind clouds of smoke, while the marquis said, guilelessly:

"Ah, no, my dear captain! The position of an American woman who succeeds in penetrating into the Faubourg St.-Germain is very enviable. There are titles there which were old when some of the most envied English titles—so-called, old—were created. There exists nowhere on earth a finer courtesy than in my country, and one's courtesy to one's wife, even if she were an American, would be unfailing."

"They are fine old titles," said Mr. Hollenden, "but I suppose one of them could not be secured by an American girl, no matter how pretty, without a large dowry?"

The marquis's eyes glistened.

"Indeed no. Most emphatically no. And the older the title, the larger the *dot* must be."

Mr. Hollenden leaned his elbows on the table and looked quizzically at the Frenchman, and said, albeit with a blush:

"But on the question of faithfulness to the wife, which we were just discussing. We Americans dare not go about it so openly. The women won't stand it. With us it is generally a question of a lower class. With you it is among equals."

The other men looked at each other over the Westerner's head.

"How would an international marriage stand the strain?"

The marquis was amazed at the ease with which he

was handling this mining king. It was the American who had broached the subject, and who was thus forcing it into such close quarters.

"Ah, as to that, you do not understand. A French nobleman might dishonor the wife he respected, but never the woman who had enriched him!"

"Ah, I see!" said the Nevada miner. "Money, then, is the basis of French honor."

"Ah, *no*!" exclaimed the marquis, flushing. "I am afraid, monsieur, that you do not understand French honor!"

"I'm afraid I don't!" said Mr. Hollenden, bluntly.

The Frenchman smoked furiously. His fingers itched to hand his card to Mr. Hollenden and provoke a duel. But he reflected that he had already offered battle to one member of the family yesterday. It would not do to seek a quarrel with another to-day.

"Money!" he hissed, at last. "And it is always what you Americans talk about! Nothing but money!"

"Yes, we do talk about it," admitted Mr. Hollenden. "We Americans always talk the most about what we care the least. That's why we talk about money, and honor love. You French talk about love, and honor money!"

For an instant the marquis glared at Mr. Hollenden. Then he threw his head back and laughed. It was not a pretty laugh. His eye-teeth were pointed, and his mustaches were pointed. His laugh brought lines into his face, which were not reassuring. Nevertheless, Captain Corcoran and Townshend were glad to hear it. At least it assured them of peace. They, representing simply the diplomatic and social, must needs be civil even to a Parisian's vices. It was only Mr. Hollenden's fat little check-book which could afford to be insolent.

Townshend and Shirley found themselves pacing

the deck together soon after this conversation. Townshend liked the young fellow—he had such an air of strength, and, withal, he seemed so clean and fresh.

"French thoughts sound so unspeakably vulgar and underbred when put into English," said Shirley, giving himself a shake like a big Newfoundland. "One looks for them in the French language—they sort of belong—but in English—"

"In English," said Townshend, knocking the ashes from his cigar with his little finger, "they sound as the dining-room looks the next morning after a champagne supper. There are some things that go with sunshine, and that is English, and there are other things that go with artificial light and orchids, and that is French. French is more poetical than the most exquisite English ever put together. You never can get the artistic effect of poetry as you can in French, any more than you can feel a rhapsody at ten o'clock after your cold bath and your ride in the crisp morning air. You feel clean, healthful, energetic. But with colored candles and silk hangings, and all the accessories which turn the natural into the artificial—those are for another mood. And yet, say what you may, there is the charm about the French that one finds in all things which are complete. Their culture is, without doubt, the highest which now exists. They have the air of being finished—polished off, quite done, as it were. Not that they have stopped working or thinking or studying, but one feels with a Frenchwoman of the upper classes as if she were complete. As if, while there was nothing new in life to offer her in the way of sensation or emotion, as if she had arrived at the power of correct selection, and that from now on she would choose what she cared to learn as an epicure chooses his dishes—from experience in what to avoid. The American woman's mind is more active, more curious, less reposeful. She wants to know it *all*

—but chiefly because *the great book of human life,* which the women of all other nations are completely mistress of, has been closed to her forever."

"It is a curious thing," said Shirley, laughing, "to hear d'Auteuil defend the French at the expense of all Paris. He says that Paris is not France; that the temptations are too great there to be resisted; that in the small towns, where are the bone and sinew of France, there exist happy marriages and faithful husbands and wives. I wonder how it would sound if, at the Jockey Club, I should defend American morality, American chastity, by saying, 'But, my dear d'Auteuil, you must remember that New York and Chicago are not America. To be sure, the temptations there are so great that we have virtually no morality among the upper classes. But among our tradesmen, and in Keokuk and Milwaukee and Harlem, there you will find happily married people and faithful husbands and honorable wives!'"

Townshend laughed.

"Perfectly true, yet the time will probably come when that will be said of America. You must remember how young we are yet. All older civilizations have come to it."

Shirley shook his head.

"I can't believe you," he said. "It sounds almost as if you were to say it about your sister or mine!"

"Heaven forbid! We shall all be dead long before that time. But you are as ardent a patriot as your sister. How does it come?"

"I don't know," said Shirley. "There she is. You must ask her. I suppose it is in the blood. My ancestors, on my mother's side, have been in the army ever since there was one. Before that they were in the English army, and my one ambition in going abroad is to see the French army—the army of Napoleon."

Townshend laughed as the two seated themselves on each side of Rose's steamer-chair.

" My dear fellow, fond as I am of the French, I warn you not to build too much upon the French army. In appearance it is the least imposing in all Europe. The uniforms of the men are generally ill-fitting, and Frenchmen are all small in size. As for the army of Napoleon —that ended with Moscow."

" I am sorry to hear you say that," said Shirley. " I have always admired the French for their fidelity. I never knew of anything finer than the way they honor their brave dead. You know that in the case of Latour, the First Grenadier of France, because he persistently refused promotion, after countless acts of bravery, leading eight thousand grenadiers in the army of the Pyrenees, he still continued to wear the uniform of a captain. His corps obtained the name of " The Infernal Column," on account of its deadly bayonet charges, and for all these things Napoleon gave him the title of the First Grenadier of France. But what promotion and what rank could reward his bravery as completely as the custom which obtained to honor his memory ? Each morning, until the close of the empire, at the muster-roll of his regiment, his name continued to be called, and the oldest sergeant answered, ' Dead upon the field of honor !' "

Rose clapped her hands.

" Yes, I like that," admitted Townshend. " It has a fine martial ring. But I strongly incline to the impression that you may lay that to the French sentiment rather than to fidelity. I never have heard them commended for *that* virtue before. But a fine and tender sentiment—yes. Many of the homely qualities Americans admire, the French lack. But they make up for it in the quality of their culture. I grow so irritated with America, and the crude tastes of Americans, when

I come home for my brief visits, that I turn with relief and love to a country which reverences art as she should be reverenced. The Anglo-Saxon, as a race, does not need art from an inner craving which must be satisfied. It adopts it as an accessory. The Gallic nations need it, as they need bread. If you should turn loose a few thousands of American poor in Paris or Dresden, you would not find them, even on free days, in the museums and galleries. Yet in America, the poor of the Gallic and Slavonic nations are cheek by jowl with the American who cannot afford to pay the entrance fee. In Paris a workman in his blue blouse knows the name of the famous picture in the Salon, and who painted it, and to what school he belongs. He understands art from within. It is his inheritance, in his blood, in the air of Paris. Nor is there any true sentiment in the American nature. There is very little to it besides a love of trade, a feminine sentimentality, and a keen sense of the ridiculous."

" There is patriotism," said Rose, coloring.

" Pardon me. There is very little of what *I* call patriotism in America. There is a braggadocio spirit of feeling that we can ' lick all creation,' but that comes from ignorance of the strength of the standing armies of Europe. If we ever ' lick all creation ' it will be at an enormous cost, a cost so great that we cannot estimate it from here, because we have practically no standing army — thirty-five thousand men all told — a mere mouthful for Russia or Germany. No, American so-called patriotism is largely American conceit. Patriotism includes loyalty to the government, loyalty to the army, loyalty to the Supreme Court, and to all that makes for solidarity and the country's good. But for love of America as a nation, no, there is little of the true spirit of patriotism."

" Why is it, do you think ?" asked Shirley.

"I don't know exactly. I think it is because all the other nations are expansionists, and we have never taken any part in the East. Then we are so far away. We are safe from invasion, and we never have aroused the jealousy of other nations. We do not *need* an army as constantly as they. And then, too, our army is so small, it is never before the eyes of the people. All that the people know of the army is a paragraph in fine print now and then in a newspaper, that a regiment has changed posts. Our officers never wear their uniforms, except when on duty. They act as if they were ashamed of the blue, whereas over all Europe the army is constantly before the eyes of the people. In St. Petersburg, Cairo, Constantinople, Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw, Paris, and London, the uniform of the different regiments is the most familiar sight the people see. It is no enemy, as our tax-payers regard it; it is a friend. They do not stare at it from curiosity, but from pride. It is as it should be, the bulwark, the defence of the nation, and it inspires a respect which is unknown in the mind of the average American, whose stupidity is oftenest voiced in some cheap joke about 'a man making a monkey of himself in such togs,' or some unworthy sneer at the symbol of the very noblest institution our country boasts."

"It is the ambition of my life to enter the army," said Shirley; "but for some reason father opposes it, and he fidgets and won't say why he refuses. I want to study the standing armies of Europe. I want to see the English army!"

"It is the finest in the world," answered Townshend. "I am not weak nor emotional; but when I see the red coats, when I see the size, the cleanness, the precision, the whole make-up of the English army, something makes me want to stand up and take my hat off. We are really related, you know. Then the pride of the

English in their army ! It does me good to see it. As Miss Schermerhorn says : ' England is not theatrical, she is dramatic.' You think Americans are patriotic. You think *you* are patriotic. I used to think *I* was before I went abroad to live. But I have come to know that the patriotism of England, for example, is of such superior texture, that ours seems theatrical and tawdry in comparison. There, when the national hymn is sung or played, every English man and woman are on their feet out of respect to their country and respect to themselves. At Carlsbad and other watering-places, I have seen gouty old men and disabled old women assisted to their feet by flunkeys and smart maids, when it was agony to stand. Your Englishman lives up to his convictions. The Englishman is self-respecting ; the American is self-boastful. In America I always rise when they play " The Star Spangled Banner." And in theatres I have been laughed at openly, commented upon rudely, and sometimes insulted for an act of respect to my country and to my flag—a flag that every man and woman there pretended to love and respect. The cheapness of the American mind, their fury at being taught anything by the older civilizations of Europe, their thin-skinned hatred of advice, their stupid self-sufficiency are what rankle most in the heart of a man who goes abroad in the true spirit of progress and enlightenment. Your intelligent man is appealed to by those elements in a constitutional monarchy which make for good government. But if he comes home to bring the fruit of his experience to his own country, he is confronted by such a living wall of stupidity and conceit from the representatives of an ignorant and self-satisfied constituency that he not only gives up in despair, but he is branded as an Anglo-maniac, a traitor, and his stay in Europe is said to have turned his head.

"That is why I say that Americans are unpatriotic. They could show their love of country in many better ways than in mere talk. If, for instance, when we make a law, we would make one that we were willing to live up to, instead of immediately hiring a shrewd lawyer to invent a way to get around it. Everything of that sort tends to make us unpatriotic. We regard our country as something big and rich from which we must wrest everything we can. What if a certain policy cripples her? Who cares for the real good of the country or sees how our greed is undermining our national character? Only a few public-spirited men and a few thoughtful women. But the rest—but then, the whole thing is answered in this. The average American doesn't think consecutively. His mind is like a toad. It hops."

"Then, according to you, there is very little to admire in the American character?" said Shirley.

Townshend blew a fine line of smoke into the air.

"Wait until you have travelled in Europe for two years, and tell me your own opinion," he said. "You will have sifted things by that time."

Rose shook her head vehemently, and let Shirley pull her out of her steamer-chair. She looked down at Townshend with a confused feeling. In her heart she bitterly resented every word that he had spoken against the perfectness of her dear America. But his tone was so dispassionate, his manner indicated such dignified grief and regret at being obliged to speak in such dispraise, that the American girl's clever brain whispered, vaguely, "What if you, too, with all your fiery love of country, should find these things true?"

But as yet the point of view was too new to her, and her confidence in Townshend's purity of judgment too insecure to permit her to face the possibility.

"Good-bye to the man who does not love his own country," she said, as she moved away.

Townshend made no reply.

"I am not sure," said Shirley, "that he does not love it better than any of us."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Maria Hollenden descended from her carriage it was already dark, and the *concierge* had closed the huge door of number ninety-nine. The woman grumbled aloud when she saw who it was, for Maria was no favorite with servants. But for once Maria did not answer her. She, like most Americans, waged a perpetual war with all *concierges*, with the result that she got imposed upon and cheated and annoyed more than any other occupant of the apartments.

"The Burgundy came to-day, mademoiselle," said Lucie, sullenly, as Maria stopped at her door to ask for letters. "Shall I send it up?"

"Yes," answered Maria.

"All of it, mademoiselle?"

"No, keep one bottle for yourself!" snapped Maria.

"One bottle, Jacques! Mademoiselle says we are to have *one* bottle from the case of Burgundy! *Mon Dieu!* How fine it must be to be rich and able to give!"

But Maria, after ordering a twenty-thousand-dollar communion service, felt anything but rich. Her knees trembled a little as she wondered what she would do should her father refuse her the money. She never had asked for so large a sum before. To be sure, she could sell some of her stocks and pay for it herself if worst came to worst. She was a shrewd financier and her allowance had always been liberal.

"Is that all, mademoiselle?" said the *concierge*, as Maria still hesitated. The blazing fire in the pretty

room looked warm and cheerful through the glass walls. Maria's *entresol* was not nearly so inviting as this little corner where Madame Lucie lived—and lived on the fat of the land, too. Her daughter was one of the most notorious women of Paris, and no one was more proud of her profession than this same respectably married *concierge* of the apartment owned by the Comtesse de Brissy.

" I understood you to say just *one* bottle of Burgundy, did I not, mademoiselle ?"

" Out of the twelve ? I should think you did !" cried Maria. " Or would you like to keep eleven and let me have one ?"

" No, no, mademoiselle," said the woman. " Certainly one is plenty. And thank you a thousand times. There are no letters to-day, mademoiselle. Good-evening."

She cast a vindictive look after Maria's curious little figure.

"Ah, *mon Dieu !* What a shape ! And my Lili so pretty ! What arms ! What a bust ! Ah, it is better to be poor sometimes, when one looks in the glass. She shall not have the letters which came to-day nor the cards which came yesterday. I burn the cards—so ! I will read the letters before I burn them. Ah, how disgusting ! Two of them are in English. Those I will ask Madame Flamont's maid to read to me. She speaks English. This one—ah, it means nothing. And this —well, this one I will save. It may be useful to Lili. Think of it ! Only one bottle of Burgundy ! And what a fright she is ! The good God avenged all of us upon her when He made her. Yet Clemence tells me that she wears beautiful *lingerie*. For what purpose ? No one ever sees it ! Ah, the good God must laugh at her for spending her money on *lingerie*. He knows it is all wasted."

Maria, still too much dazed by the events of the afternoon to notice the black looks of the *concierge*, slowly mounted the stairs and rang the bell of her *entresol*.

The butler opened the door, and her dog, a hideous Mexican hairless dog, ran to meet her. She caught the little beast up and kissed him over and over again. It is a risk when even a pretty woman owns a repulsive, hairless creature like that for a pet. But when Maria Hollenden held Bijou up to her own face, even her servants coughed behind their hands.

"I shall not come to the table, Louis. Tell Clemence to come to me at once, and bring my dinner to my boudoir."

Clemence was maid, housekeeper, confidential servant, even a sort of friend to the lonely woman. She was slow-moving, heavy, and substantial. But she had the grace not to hate her mistress, as the other servants did. She knew mademoiselle's good traits, and she forgave her temper.

"Clemence," said Miss Hollenden, slowly—"Clemence, the most wonderful thing in the world has happened. The most wonderful thing in the world."

She twisted her hands together and walked up and down her tiny bedchamber, with her nervous, jerky step, like a walking doll, one of whose springs is out of order. Clemence crossed her hands over her capacious stomach and watched her in attentive silence.

"I would never have dreamed it, and yet my commonsense tells me it is true. I remember how he used to watch me at Vrianault. I seemed to fascinate him. I have noticed that I often have that power over men. They always watch me—they watch everything I do. But with him, perhaps because I loved him so, I never dared think that it was anything except the fascination which American girls have for most foreign men. I dared not think he loved me. But he did! He does!

And yet it is a miracle, after all. Clemence, Clemence, listen to me. The Marquis d'Auteuil has proposed for my hand."

"The Marquis d'Auteuil, mademoiselle!" gasped Clemence. "Poor soul!" she muttered, under her breath. But with all the Frenchwoman's tact she came forward at once and offered her congratulations.

With these, her first congratulations, a sudden grotesque coquetry seemed to descend upon Maria. She tossed her head and hopped backwards from her maid's outstretched hand.

"You are congratulating me! So you think I mean to take him? You are sure I intend to jump at the first chance I ever had? Why, Clemence! How do you know but that I shall refuse him?"

"Refuse the Marquis d'Auteuil!" cried Clemence. "*You!*"

"And why not, pray?" said Maria, bridling and thrusting out her little thin form. "I am not so old and ugly that I may not have another! And then, with my father coming over, we shall set up an establishment, and I shall have more position and go more into society. That may bring me offers."

"But is not your young sister coming also?" asked Clemence, shrewdly. "A young and beautiful sister is no advantage to the older one."

"But she is not beautiful!" cried Maria, stamping her foot and growing purple in the face. "The Comtesse de Brissy said she had no *cachet* whatsoever."

"She has the making of a beauty, and once in Paris—wait, mademoiselle!" answered the Frenchwoman, ominously.

Maria seized Rose's photograph, sent two years ago, and examined it eagerly. She had lived too long in the artistic atmosphere of Europe not to recognize, in spite of her consuming jealousy, that her sister's face was

one of extraordinary beauty—a little too thin, perhaps, a little too innocent of the world, but beautiful beyond a doubt. Maria loved beauty above everything. Except that her whole nature was perverted and her tastes decadent from having *tempérament* but insufficient brain to build upon, she would have made an artist in criticism at least.

As it was, she allowed prejudice to sway her judgment to such an extent that the intelligent sometimes thought her feeble-minded.

"You are entirely wrong, Clemence," she said, putting the photograph upside-down behind the clock.

Clemence was not a Frenchwoman for nothing. She knew Maria Hollenden as no one else on earth knew her. She knew that while her mistress never was known to admit that she was in the wrong, she often acted upon advice which she apparently spurned.

Clemence said no more, but busied herself laying the dinner which Louis brought to the door.

"Dinner is served, mademoiselle," said Clemence.

"I cannot eat! Take it away," said Maria, throwing herself upon the bed.

Suddenly she sprang up. She had not signified to the comtesse that she would accept Raoul! She had, in fact, said nothing. What must they think of her?

"Clemence!" she cried; "order the brougham for nine o'clock, and bring me my pale-blue crêpe dinner-gown. You must go with me to call upon the Marquise d'Auteuil."

And so it came about that just as the comtesse was folding the letter from her brother, the butler entered and asked if the ladies were receiving. Mademoiselle Hollenden had called.

"Oh yes, I suppose so!" answered the comtesse. "Maman, you *must* remain and see her. Remember Vrianault! We must dissemble. Ah, my dear Maria!"

She offered her cheek, and Maria kissed first one and then the other. The marquise held her hand out stiffly at arm's-length. Maria always spoke in French to them, much to their annoyance. They would have preferred practising their English.

"I came," said Maria, nervously pulling off her gloves, "to offer my apologies for not answering you properly this afternoon, when you—when you—"

"When I made you the offer of Raoul's hand," said the comtesse, kindly.

Maria blushed and looked at her gratefully. The cruel pale-blue crêpe clung wickedly close to her shrunken figure, and revealed its hollows with all the depravity of a Jersey bathing-suit.

The comtesse looked at Maria's shrivelled brown hands and thought with a shudder of her brother's, and of the horror his beauty-loving soul would experience with such a fright for a wife.

"I was afraid you would not know that I meant to—to accept him."

"Mademoiselle was afraid we would not know that she meant to accept him, maman!" said the comtesse.

The marquise said, in her throaty voice:

"It was well amiable of you to come and relieve our minds."

"Naturally we were anxious, were we not, maman?"

"Very."

"But Raoul declares mademoiselle to be full of amiable ways. He said so in his last letter."

"You have had a letter recently? He spoke of me? May I see it?"

"Indeed you may not. It would frighten you by its vehemence. I never heard my brother use such ardent language about any one as he does about you."

Maria bridled.

"I knew he loved me," she said.

" Eh ?" said the marquise, sitting up in her chair.

" And how did you know that ?" asked the comtesse.

" I could tell it by the way he watched me at Vrianault and by the look in his eyes. You know you can always tell so much more by the look in men's eyes than by what they say. Don't you think so ?"

" Well, no, I can't say that I do," said the comtesse. " I think, in matters of marriage, it is just as well to have a man put it in words, and if he will put it in writing, so much the better."

"Oh, I do not agree with you at all. Some of the most ardent affairs I ever have had have come and gone without a word spoken on either side."

" And how were they managed, mademoiselle, if I may ask?" said the marquise. " By some third party, I suppose ?"

" Oh no. But I will tell you if you care to hear. I think American girls' romances are generally interesting to the French."

" Do, mademoiselle. We shall be charmed to hear."

Clemence, waiting in the corridor, coughed loudly. Maria's face crimsoned.

" Clemence," she called, " wait for me in the room of the *concierge !*"

" But yes, mademoiselle."

The comtesse turned to her mother, and, with the characteristic lack of courtesy among the French towards Americans, said in Spanish :

" We must beware of that maid. She coughed to warn her not to tell something."

" Ah, you speak Spanish besides English," said Maria, enviously. " As for me, I speak only German, French, and Italian."

The comtesse smiled. She had heard of Maria's German and Italian.

" Spanish is the only language we French care to

speak. All the world must speak ours, or—we do not speak with them! But we speak Spanish because our money is invested there, and we wish to know what they say. But you were about to tell me of your *amours*."

"Oh, great Heavens, no!" cried Maria, vehemently. "An American never has *amours*. We only have affairs."

"Ah, and the difference, mademoiselle? Eugénie, give our guest a drop of chartreuse."

"There, now. Begin."

"Well," said Maria, "there was one tragic affair that I had with an Italian count in Naples. I saw him for three days in succession, and there was always the same look in his eyes that I spoke of in your son's, the same look followed my every movement. I returned his look, and on the third day, driven to perfect despair by the fact that he could make no headway against my coldness, although he had only spoken to say 'Good-morning,' or 'Will you hand me the butter?' he rushed away and proposed for the hand of a little signorina whose father was very rich. He only cared for her money, and I drove him to it! Now that, slight as it may sound in the telling, was a real tragedy in my life. It embittered me for months."

The Frenchwomen exchanged glances.

"How very interesting!" said the marquise.

Maria flushed gratefully.

"Another drop of chartreuse, mademoiselle. It is very fine."

"It *is* fine," said Maria, sipping the golden liquid.

"But there have been others, have there not?"

"Others? Indeed, I should think so! There was one on the Nile—an Englishman. He too gave me these curious glances. Whenever I entered the dining-room he watched me. He took his seat near me on the terrace. He watched me over the top of his newspaper.

And once he called his friend over to look at me when he thought I was not looking, for I heard him say: 'There she is!' And his friend said, 'By Jove! I don't wonder you can't take your eyes off her.' And the first one said: 'I sha'n't let her out of my sight even for a horned toad,' from which I made out that he must be a naturalist and preferred me even to his profession. So when we decided to sail for Brindisi, I was not at all surprised to find that he followed me. He sat opposite to me at the captain's table, and our state-rooms were even next each other. One night we had a storm, and I distinctly heard this man say to his friend: 'I shall save her and let you drown if necessary!' But just as I had made up my mind that this man and I were made for each other, I was taken ill and had to remain at Brindisi, so I never knew where my naturalist went or what became of him."

"How very interesting," said the marquise, again. Maria's cheeks were flushed at her success in entertaining the terrible old marquise of whom she stood in such awe.

"Will you have another drop of chartreuse, mademoiselle?" said the comtesse.

"No, oh *no!*" said Maria. "I—I do not care for any more."

"Ah, I am sorry you do not like the chartreuse. My brother selected it with such care."

"Did he?" said Maria. "Then I will have one more taste of it."

"Ah, that goes better," said the comtesse. "And after so many affairs of this sort, have you any feeling left for our poor Raoul?"

Maria clutched the arms of the chair with her little brown bird-claws. The chartreuse brought spots of red into her cheeks and she felt her tongue loosen.

"Have I any feeling left for Raoul?" she repeated.

She blinked her eyes. "Shall I tell you? You are his mother and sister, and you can understand. And then, too, you are French. These things are so ridiculed and misunderstood in America. My life has been very empty and barren. I never have had much love, so that the love of the comtesse was really my first experience. My nature is full of sentiment which I never can express, and if I try to explain myself to an American girl she looks at me in horror and says I am *décadente*, or else she ridicules me and tells me that it is indecent to speak of such matters. But with the French I can speak. Your daughter's, marquise, has been the only real friendship of my life. Her love, her sympathy, her sweet sincerity, her delicate tact in expressing it, have combined to make me almost worship her. If I said that to an American she would say it was because the comtesse had a title. But while I respect the title, it is only for her exquisitely poetic nature, the fine sentiment, the quality of her mind, and the fact that because of her noble birth she lives up to the motto 'Noblesse oblige.' Who but a Frenchwoman would have the exquisiteness to offer a gift to her beloved church on the eighth anniversary of her dear husband's death! What tenderness! What fidelity you French have! And the comtesse is the loveliest of them all. It is for that I love her. She will never know what she has been to me. She is the only one who has any interest in me. Think of that dreadful fire in the Bazar de la Charité! All my American friends knew that, as it was conducted by Frenchwomen of fashion, I should in all probability be there, yet did one of them cable to know? Not one! Not one of all the Americans I have entertained and worked myself nearly to death trying to please! Not one of them!"

Her thin American voice rose almost to a scream.

"But, my dear Maria," interrupted the comtesse,

"why should they, when you yourself have related to me with great distinctness and endless detail the history of your quarrels with each and every one of your friends? You have read me the letters you have written them, telling how you regretted your hospitality to them, and severing all friendship with them forever."

"But you—*you* sent to inquire!" cried Maria.

"Ah, you never have insulted *me*, as you have all your other friends."

"Would you too have deserted me if I had?" asked Maria, piteously.

"Undoubtedly. I would never have forgiven you—never, as some of your American friends have. An American forgives and forgets insults which we French would harbor and revenge if it took a lifetime. I am amazed that your American friends ever have forgiven your insulting letters. I? I would have killed you for them—or Raoul would have killed your brother. You never have known what it was to govern yourself in any particular. You must learn control. Raoul is not an American. You cannot speak to him, nor write to him as you do to your Americans when you are angry or jealous."

"What would he do?" asked Maria, with wide eyes.

Both Frenchwomen laughed ominously.

"You would lose him," answered the marquise.

Maria gave a cry like a wounded animal.

"I will try! Oh, I will! I could not bear it to lose him now! I have waited so long—so long. I thought he never would come!"

"So you have been waiting for him," said the comtesse, rubbing her arm fretfully.

"I have waited ever since the first hour I saw him," answered Maria, fervently. She twisted her hands together. "I remember the first day I was at Vrianault, you showed me his suite of rooms, and when I came to

his bedroom I could see him, in my mind's eye, just as distinctly as if I had already met him, and I wondered then if I ever would be his wife and privileged to enter that room whenever I liked."

The marquise cleared her throat.

"It is very interesting to hear all this, is it not, maman? But, oh, how I miss Hedwig!"

"You miss the way she used to draw her fingers down your arm?" cried Maria. "How cleverly she did it! I used to watch her with such admiration!"

"You are the only one who could ever imitate her," said the comtesse. "You have such marvellous powers of observation!"

"I wonder if I could do it for you now?" asked Maria, eagerly.

She came and knelt at the Frenchwoman's side and began to smooth her inner arm, drawing her fingers out through the palm of the comtesse's hand. The comtesse shivered like a stroked cat and stretched herself sensuously. The marquise watched the tense face of the American in silence. She was displeased with her daughter for accepting such attentions.

"No one knows," proceeded Maria, eagerly, "how I have longed to be a mother—to have a child of my very own. It horrifies my American friends when I say so. But it seems so simple and easy to say it to you. You view the matter in the only innocent and proper light, and you speak of such matters among yourselves so naturally—you will never know what it has been to me to pour myself out to you in this way. My American friends ridicule the idea that there can be an equality in a friendship between an American and a Frenchwoman, but they little know the exquisite texture of ours, dear comtesse! There is nothing sordid in it — not one coarse or jarring note. I love you!"

"Have you decided upon an hôtel for your father?"

interrupted the comtesse. "He depended so much upon your judgment, if I were you, I would have one all selected for him. Of course he will not know his Paris, nor where he ought to live, and you are so familiar with its aristocratic quarters, what do you think of maman's charming little hôtel in rue de Chaillot? I would not have him in an apartment, my dear. It is not sufficiently dignified for the father of the young Marquise d'Auteuil. I would persuade him to take an hôtel. Do you know maman's?"

"Oh yes, indeed," answered Maria, eagerly. "I know it perfectly. It is charming, and just about the size we should want."

"Then why not sign the lease at once? I never saw a father depend so much upon a clever daughter's judgment as your father depends upon yours. Here are the leases. Let me read them to you."

"Oh, I know the hôtel so well it is not necessary to read them. How much is the rent?"

"Oh, a mere *bagatelle* to so rich a man as your father. Only forty thousand francs a year. Do you think he will be pleased to find you the *fiancée* of the Marquis d'Auteuil and the future mistress of Vrianault? Here is the pen. Sign your own name, not his. There!"

Maria's cheeks burned and her eyes glittered. She would have signed her father's name to a check if the comtesse had asked her to, and had looked at her out of those liquid brown eyes so like Raoul's.

The marquise and her daughter remained standing after the lease was signed.

"I must go," said Maria, hurriedly. The Frenchwomen made no objections, and the comtesse rang for the butler and sent for Maria's maid.

They only shook hands at parting, although Maria would have kissed them both if she had dared.

When the door closed behind her, the two looked at each other silently, and then smiled.

" Well ?" said the comtesse. " Raoul has interpreted her well, has he not ? He will not find her cold."

" He will find her ready," answered her mother. " But let us dismiss her from our minds ! What are your plans for to-morrow ?"

" I am going to see M. Falize to arrange for my commission on the communion set. It will save asking the Jew for a new loan."

The marquise looked admiringly at her daughter.

" How clever you are at managing, Eugénie !" she said. " I did not know why you had those leases here !"

Just then the butler entered with a cablegram.

The comtesse tore it open, then gave a little cry of delight.

" It is from Raoul ! He sails on the same ship with the family and intends to propose for the hand of the younger sister ! I have seen her photograph, and she will be a beauty. Ah, my hideous Maria, you will not be the Marquise d'Auteuil, after all ! Oh, how happy I am ! That dear Raoul ! So clever and adroit !"

She rang the bell.

" Henri," she said, " we are not at home to Mlle. Hollenden until I give further orders !"

CHAPTER IX

WHEN Maria and Clemence were in the brougham, Maria turned on the maid like a tigress.

"How dared you cough in that manner to remind me not to betray myself!" she began. "Do you think I am a child—a baby to be told by a servant when to be discreet? I will not allow it! Such impertinence!"

"They are very clever, the marquise and the comtesse," said Clemence, simply.

"Do you mean to insinuate that *I* am not clever—that I am not their equal?" demanded Maria, churning herself into a fury. "I will show you how I manage things! I will show you how far I dare go! I have rented an hôtel for my father already—before he comes! I have decided to take the hôtel of the Marquise d'Auteuil in the rue de Chaillot. He will not deny me anything now that I am to marry one of the oldest titles in France. We shall live at Vrianault. I shall restore it, and I shall live every day among those magnificent tapestries which nothing would induce them to part with. They are much reduced in circumstances, otherwise they never would have left the Faubourg St.-Germain to live in an apartment, yet they never have parted with those treasures."

"The *concierge* says the comtesse gets her apartment rent free from her Jew landlord," said Clemence, in a curious tone.

"I don't believe it!" cried Maria, in a fury. "That is an infamous lie, made up by a malicious woman! How

dare you listen to such a thing, much less repeat it to an unmarried woman? Clemence, if you ever speak to me again in terms of disrespect of the family of my *fiancé* I shall dismiss you!"

The Frenchwoman's teeth glittered in a smile as she leaned back in the brougham and made no reply.

Clemence cast a disdainful glance at Madame Lucie as they passed her door. Madame Lucie returned the compliment and indicated in pantomime the miserly nature of the shrunken little figure of the American who marched past, her head in the air and her mind busy with plans of her future grandeur.

The actions of the *concierge* so enraged Clemence that, as soon as she had put Maria to bed and had been dismissed for the night, she went down to call upon Madame Lucie.

The *concierge* made haste to receive her and to offer some wine and biscuits.

"Try this Burgundy, Madame Clemence," said the *concierge*. "It is from Madame Flamont's on the third floor. She understands good wine, does Madame Flamont. The Comte de Rouen selects it for her. See, it is really a *fine* Burgundy. Hold your glass up—so—and look at it. Why does your American *rastaquouére* buy such cheap wine? Is it that she does not know, or because she will not part with the francs?"

"Her *pourboires are* small, for an American," answered Clemence, shrewdly, "but that is no reason why you should hate her. We are well taken care of, and better times are coming."

"Ah, better times are always coming with *you*, Madame Clemence! You look always on the bright side, but it does not always come true. How is your poor daughter?"

Clemence's face grew purple. Her lame daughter

had just been married to a respectable shopkeeper in Tours.

"My daughter is very well, and very happy in her marriage," answered Clemence. "And *your* daughter, Madame Lucie, is she well?"

"Very well, I thank you, and growing richer all the time. She sent me a fine black silk dress to-day, only a little shiny across the back and split out under the arms, but much finer than the one Madame Flamont gave to her maid Fanchon who speaks English. It is much too fine for me to wear now. I shall lay it aside to be buried in. Ah, it is charming to be so rich as Lili! I suppose it will be many years until your daughter sends you a black silk dress, now, but a little shiny across the back and split out under the arms?"

"Perhaps it will, for whatever my daughter sends me will be got honestly. I dare say, now, your Lili would be glad to have a marriage certificate to hang on the wall?"

"Not if it were only to a butcher in Tours!" cried Madame Lucie. "My Lili has gentlemen for her friends —gentlemen of title, perhaps the husbands and brothers of some fine people that your American *rastaquouére* runs after!"

"My American will soon be the one to be run after," answered Clemence, deliberately. "I came down to-night to tell you that she is the *fiancée* of the Marquis d'Auteuil! Madame la Comtesse de Brissy proposed for her hand to-day, and this evening we have gone to call upon them and make our formal acceptance."

Madame Clemence crossed her arms and watched Madame Lucie with malice such as only a Frenchwoman of the lower classes would be capable of feeling.

The *concierge* turned pale and her Burgundy spilled in her trembling hand.

"Are you sure of what you say ? Have the contracts been signed ? Is the *dot* agreed upon ?"

" No, but I am sure it is all settled, for the rich father of mademoiselle and the beautiful young sister and the handsome brother are soon to sail from America to live in Paris. We are to take a fine hôtel and set up an establishment which will surprise you. Then you will see the Marquis d'Auteuil calling daily upon the 'little brown rat,' as you call her, for the American *rastaquouére* is to be called the Marquise d'Auteuil and to have Vrianault !"

From Madame Lucie's agitation Clemence was convinced of the truth of her suspicion, and she drank her Burgundy with unctuous enjoyment.

They took leave of each other with many expressions of good will and admiration, and Clemence heavily propelled herself up-stairs to her room.

When she was gone, Lucie glanced doubtfully at the clock, but the lateness of the hour deterred her.

"It will be time enough to break it to the pretty dear to-morrow," she muttered. "How will she bear it? She has warned him never to marry, yet he has defied her ! I suspected some such trick from his rushing off to America the day after the fire ! Lili said it was to avoid duels, but trust the old fox of a mother—the old she-bear—to watch over the welfare of a pretty innocent like Lili ! Oh, my little dove, so pretty, and so much in love with him ! And the other beast, this brown water-rat with her money, to come and steal the life away from my Lili ! Ah, *mon Dieu !* What a fright she will look beside him, with her shocking hands, and his the wonder and admiration of all Paris—smaller and whiter even than Lili's ! How she loves him, that Lili of mine ! How she has given him money ! The little fool ! She never would even have taken his notes if I had not counselled it. Ah, well, our revenge will come later. If

Lili loses her lover, the brown water-rat will pay those notes! What a figure! Such arms, and no bust, and my Lili so pretty! Ah, *mon Dieu!* This is a queer world!"

The *concierge* made fast the door, wiping away a tear now and then with the back of her hand. Then she turned out the lights and went to her bedroom, still muttering and still shaking her head.

CHAPTER X

ON the fourth day out from New York the weather cleared, and, as if by magic, the decks became peopled with pale-faced women, who staggered to their steamer-chairs, supported by patient husbands and long-suffering deck-stewards. The brilliant sunshine, however, and the smooth sea soon helped the invalids to recover, and the deserted decks became a mimic world once more.

To Rose Hollenden each day was at once a revelation and a joy. She was of too irrepressible a nature to grieve long for something which had not gone forever, but which was simply out of her reach for the time being. She carried her buoyancy into everything she did, and her hopefulness and general optimism were her chief charms. She was neither brilliant nor wonderful in any way. She possessed the American girl's native quickness of wit, and she had that sharp little manner of putting things which made you look up from your soup, if you sat next her at dinner, but it seemed more than all to be her electrical vitality which made you like her. There was a sparkle to all she did, as if the sunlight went flashing over a little lake.

Some persons seem to possess an atmospheric mental quality. There are those who seem gray and leaden, as if it might rain at any moment. There are others whose cold crispness means a sharp, wintry nature, which stings like the sudden warming of frost-bitten hands. There are others whose gentle melancholy and tender pessimism mean nothing short of autumn tem-

peraments, where summer is gone forever and nothing but approaching frost can tinge their thoughts.

Then, in a class quite by themselves, come those eager natures which remind you of the approach of spring.

The first spring wind brings a suggestion of late patches of snow, of the last thaw, of the rich black earth melting beneath, of the thin green stalks of jonquils and crocuses to-day, and the promise that we shall have violets to-morrow. There is little of tenderness in a spring wind. It is too young for that. Tenderness comes with experience. But there is a rush and a whirr in it as of myriads of unseen wings, and there is a buoyancy in its sting which sends a sparkle into wintry blood and a thrill to cool pulses, for its electricity is contagious.

Rose Hollenden was like a breath of spring wind.

She came on deck that morning to find that the smooth sailing had peopled the ship again. The invalids watched her enviously. Her brilliant coloring, the energy with which she walked seemed to mock their misery. A well person is always such an irritation to the sea-sick.

Townshend came up to her at once.

"I have just been down to see your dog," he said. "What a beauty he is!"

"How good of you!" said Rose. "He is very well taken care of, isn't he?"

"Why, have *you* been down?"

"I? Oh, I go down several times a day. I have made friends with the engineer and a stoker, and I have helped to sail the ship. How crazy you all would have been if you had known!"

"Not I! But why do you care for such things?"

"Oh, I like men who *do* things!" cried the girl. "I love engines and machinery and big wheels and noise. I love to see the men who make these huge machines and I love to see the men who can manage them. I love

to ride on an engine, and I know how to run one all by myself. I have done it. And once I rode on the pilot of an engine through the Grand Cañon of the Gunnison. The president of the road had a party of us in his private car, and he said I might. Two trainmen held me on, and I never enjoyed anything more in all my life. I forgot that I was civilized. I forgot that I was a woman. I seemed to be a spirit of the west wind, and as we rushed along I shrieked with all the strength of my lungs, and frightened those two poor trainmen nearly to death. But, oh, the rush and whirr and the madness of it! That half-hour ride did more for me than some other whole years had done. It taught me things. I can't tell you what, but you would know if you ever had ridden there yourself."

"I know," said Townshend. "It is something like the feeling that comes to a man when he has broken in a horse and conquered him and tamed him."

"No, no, it is quite different from that. I've done that, too. But this is something that unlocks all your uncivilized imagination. You forget that you are human. You feel like Brünnhilde. You feel that the winds are brothers and the earth your mother and the sky your father. The Indians and all savages seem nearer to you than women in skirts and hats, and your thoughts are absolutely pagan. If you sang, you would sing the 'Walkure' war-cry, and if you worshipped, you would worship the great god Pan. You have the wings of an eagle and the heart of a seagull, and nothing seems to loosen the spirit within you but to shout to your unseen kinsmen that you are there!"

"You would like to hunt big game in Africa," said Townshend, laughing.

"Wouldn't I, though!" cried Rose. "Did you ever do that?"

"Oh yes. We must persuade your father to make up a party and go."

"He never would do such a thing! You don't know him. He wants to get to Paris to study social conditions. My sister has great influence with him, and she wishes to establish a salon. *That* is where I shall end my days!"

"I would rather see you in Africa," said Townshend.

"You would?" said Rose, opening her eyes. "Why, I thought you would be quite in favor of the drawing-room idea. You love your Paris so dearly, and you seem cut out for a quiet life."

"You would make of me a carpet knight, would you not? And a man without a country?"

Rose looked at him shyly.

"Perhaps I do not know you at all," said she, simply. "I don't want to do you an injustice."

"Miss Schermerhorn is a clever girl," said Townshend, abruptly. Rose looked at him curiously, and for the first time in her life she began to compare herself to Lida Schermerhorn. The girl's sparkle as she rushed up, closely followed by Shirley and Sir Arthur and the marquis, appealed to Rose as a trait which must be very attractive to men.

"I have three more people promised for the concert to-morrow night, Rose!" cried Lida. "There is a little California girl who is going to Paris to dance at the Folies-Bergère, who says she will do the skirt-dance and another thing that she has invented herself, and little Jock Hallock, who was president of the Hasty-Pudding Club three years ago, is going to do Romeo to Shirley's Juliet. Now the question is, what woman is tall enough to lend Shirley a skirt, or shall we make him one out of the ship's sheets?"

"Couldn't he wear one of my skirts? I am the biggest woman on board," said Rose.

"I know you are, but he would take it up so in the waist, I am afraid it would strike him about his knees. Then that funny, funny little Scotchman with blue goggles offered to do the sword-dance in Highland costume, and I nearly died at the proposition, so I accepted with effusion. Won't that be killing? Think of his dear little bare knees in the glare of our kerosene-oil foot-lights!"

"Do you suppose the captain would let me have Peter up to do some of his tricks?" asked Rose.

"Can that huge monster do any tricks?" asked Sir Arthur.

"Don't tell him, Rose! Let him wait and see! Peter was sea-sick yesterday, and so were all the other animals. Isn't it pitiful to see an animal suffer?" said Lida.

"Not nearly as pitiful as to see a man or woman suffer," said Shirley.

"Oh, I think it is much worse! A human being can speak and tell you where the pain is and to hurry up with the mustard, but poor Peter just moaned and looked at Rose as if to say, 'Why don't you do something for me, you big, strong, glorious being with a soul! I am only a dog, and if I die I'm not even going to heaven. What is the use of your superior brain if you can't put me out of my misery!'"

"Perhaps he wouldn't act, if he has been ill," said Townshend.

"Yes, he will. He is quite fit to-day, and if Miss Hollenden asks the captain I am sure he will give her permission," said Sir Arthur.

"Have you been down to see him, too?" asked Rose.

"Why, yes. He is *your* dog, isn't he?"

Townshend made a quick turn and walked away from the little group, and then came back again.

"Oh yes, he is my dog, and I am glad you like him. He is one of the best-bred dogs in the country."

"The captain wants to know if you won't serve tea in his cabin at five this afternoon, Rose, and invite your own guests, so you could ask him then if we can't have Peter up."

"Why do you call him Peter?" asked the marquis. "It is a very ugly name, I think."

"It *is* ugly," admitted Rose. "But it is strong and fine, after all. His whole name is Peter the Great. I named him after a great man. Peter the Great was wise and strong, and helped the weak and taught people and worked with his own hands, even though he was a king—an emperor. He *did* things! And I have often told my German bloodhound that if he was only as wise and faithful and good as his namesake the king, that I would be perfectly satisfied. He wears Peter the Great's picture in a gun-metal locket around his neck on state occasions, and he can tell that picture from a hundred others. I show him a number of photographs and say, 'Now, Peter, go and find the picture of the man you are named for,' and he goes and fumbles around with those big paws of his and brings it to me. He never misses it."

"So even Peter can 'do things,'" said Townshend, wondering if, among all his acquaintances, he knew a man who had done things in sufficient number and of sufficient greatness to please this young girl in the pink shirt-waist and sailor hat, with the eager desire to take her place in the world already burning within her.

"He is a brave dog," said Shirley. "He saved a child's life once. Rose had him in a cab one day and a child pulled away from its nurse and ran into the street. Another carriage was approaching, and the baby just stood still. Rose seized the lines and stopped her own cab, but before that Peter gave one bound and knocked the child over with such force that dog and baby rolled over together, while the other carriage flew by directly over the spot where the child had stood a moment since.

When Rose got out, the child was screaming from its fall, and Peter was so ashamed of his roughness, for the ungentlemanly manner, as it were, of his rescue, that he refused to be comforted. He put his paws over his eyes, as he does when Rose scolds him, and lay on the grass in perfect humiliation until Rose put his locket on him and told him how very proud she was of him. But even now, if you say, 'And that poor baby cried and cried,' Peter begins to whimper and goes to Rose to be comforted!"

"Peter is a perfect gentleman," said Rose.

"Suppose we all go down to see him," suggested Sir Arthur.

"All right. I want to look at Rose's flowers. The captain had them all put in the ice-box to keep them for the concert. Oh, Rose, I forgot to tell you that the Princeton football team are going to give an imitation of the Harvard-Yale boat-race, sitting on the floor of the stage. Won't that be too killing? And—oh, Sir Arthur, you go on ahead with the other men; I want to whisper something to Rose. There are so many English on board, I thought it would be a pretty compliment to end the concert with 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' sung by the Americans, to be followed by 'God Save the Queen,' sung by the English. Don't you think that would be nice?"

"Charming. Have you spoken for the band?"

"Yes, and I've got them in the second cabin now, practising Mr. Townshend's song. He wrote some words to that thing you were playing yesterday."

"Did he?" asked Rose. "Are they good?"

"Beautiful, *I* think. I didn't know it was in him. He wrote it in French and then translated it. It is exquisite in French, but the English is not half bad."

"I hate a man who expatriates himself, and who writes poetry!" cried Rose. "Why doesn't a big man

like Mr. Townshend go out into the world and do things?"

"Rose, you are unjust to him! He does 'do things'! You are so fond of animals—do *you* know anybody who would have travelled eight thousand miles to see with his own eyes whether his cattle could be made to suffer less? Do you know his reputation for nerve among ranchmen? Do you know that his cowboys swear by him as if he were their king? Shirley says there isn't one of them who wouldn't follow him into the jaws of certain death if he led the way. For my part, I am glad he speaks half a dozen languages and writes verse and knows which fork to use; and just because he tucks his trousers into his boots in Arizona doesn't tuck his napkin into his collar in Paris! We already know that he can ride straight and shoot straight, and that he looks you fairly in the eye when he talks to you. Townshend is what I call a big man, and I'm surprised at your narrowness and prejudice, Rose Hollenden. You've got much to learn, my girl, to teach you the difference between a man and a fool."

Rose turned her head away to conceal her pleasure in Lida's stalwart defence of Townshend. Miss Schermerhorn's brown eyes were snapping with energy and near-sightedness, and she was giving vent to certain little scornful sniffs which Rose evidently understood.

"And as to his living away from America," she went on, "I don't blame him. *I* haven't been treated so well there since we lost our money that I wouldn't live away from it if I ever could save seventy-five cents to get a start."

Rose, in great contrition, hastened to change the subject.

"There are so many more Americans on board than English, I am afraid it will not be polite of us to ask them to sing their national hymn alone."

"Not a bit of it," declared Lida, stoutly. "You don't know the English, my dear. If there was only one fat dowager, or one beef-fed man, she or he would stand up all alone and sing it to the glory of God and the honor of Great Britain, and sit down in the proud consciousness of a duty well done. So don't worry about to-morrow night. We have a hundred and ninety-three Americans and sixteen English, but the English will sing just as well as we do. Depend upon it."

An ocean-liner is a wonderful place. The ice-boxes of the *St. Louis* alone, filled with meats and vegetables for two thousand persons for six or eight days, are a sight to be remembered.

"I hope you are well enough to stand mixed odors," said Townshend, as they began to leave the familiar part of the great ship and to descend into the unknown.

"There aren't many odors on the *St. Louis*," said Miss Schermerhorn. "She is so well ventilated, she is as clean and sweet as a yacht."

"Just come and look at the kitchens!" cried Rose. "See the cooks preparing dinner! Don't you call that a wonderful sight? It is twice as appetizing as some of the big hotel kitchens."

"And the second cabin is almost as good as ours. We have a little more plush and gold paint, perhaps," said Lida, but Rose supplemented:

"I think, however, that the steerage is the best for the money—well aired, perfectly clean—"

"You don't go into the steerage, do you?" asked Sir Arthur, with a frown.

"Only to read to a poor crippled child," said Lida. "He is quite by himself. Rose had him taken from his people, who worried him, and placed where he would be better cared for. She goes every day—"

"The hold is very interesting," interrupted Rose,

coloring with embarrassment. "You have to go down that ladder. See how steep it is!"

The two men burst out laughing.

"You've never been in the hold!" exclaimed Sir Arthur.

"Haven't I, though! I wanted to see how they managed the luggage for so many people. But the engines—"

They paused at the door of the engine-room and Rose clasped her hands in ecstasy at the thunder and majesty of the giant machinery. Lida and Sir Arthur covered their ears and moved away, but Townshend, in wonder, watched the eager face of the young girl until her enthusiasm wrested his composure from him. Something of the thrill which shook the iron monster got into the blood of these two. A wild exhilaration from the Things as They Are tingled in their pulses. He moved nearer to her, and for the first time this man and this woman looked into each other's eyes—eagerly, questioningly, tremblingly, searching for the answer to that which drew them together.

It was the woman who turned away first, with a shade of disappointment. Why did this man, whose very glance had power to move her, deliberately live away from her dear country and tacitly repudiate the flag? Her budding interest in him was chilled by this unanswerable question which always troubled her soul whenever a new bond of sympathy seemed imminent.

They found Rose's friend, the stoker, feeding Peter.

"It isn't my business, sir," he said, touching his forelock to Sir Arthur, "but the young lady comes down here and seems so fond of him, sir, that we see that he wants for nothing. She understands machinery, sir!"

Sir Arthur pulled his mustaches and his red face grew redder as he thought of Rose as the mistress of his place in

Warwickshire, in the midst of his servants, who would speak of her in the admiring tone of this ship's stoker.

Peter the Great was magnificent. Rose told him to stand up, and when he obeyed her and put his great paws on her shoulder she staggered a little under his weight.

It flattered Townshend and Sir Arthur to discover that their attentions to Peter were recognized and that he came to speak to them, wagging his tail, and giving his paw at their request, as a gentleman should. But to Rose's dismay, when the Marquis d'Auteuil came forward, Peter gave him one look and turned his back on him.

"Why, Peter!" said Rose. "How very rude of you! Go and speak to the marquis directly."

Peter only wagged his tail and looked anxiously at his mistress.

"Peter, you are very ungentlemanly. Turn around this moment and apologize."

Peter's tail only wagged the harder, but he flatly refused.

Rose took his head in her two hands and tried to turn it.

"Why, I can't move him, Shirley!" she said. "See, Peter, *I* am going to shake hands with the marquis!"

The dog turned and watched her give her hand to the Frenchman. Townshend saw the dog's hair stiffen on his back. The marquis bent and kissed Rose's hand, pressing it at the same time a trifle. Peter growled and took one step towards him, and the marquis backed away.

"Why, Rose, I never saw him behave like that before!" cried Lida, coming to the rescue. "Perhaps he resents your not having called on him before," she said. turning to the marquis. "All the rest of us come every day."

She turned and led the way up-stairs.

"It is very curious," said the marquis, ignoring the incident, "how the captain seems to have placed the whole ship at the disposal of two young girls like yourself and Mlle. Hollenden. I saw him showing her how to take observations on the bridge this morning, and I find that the ship's carpenters are building some apparatus for her concert to-morrow night."

"And the band is in the second cabin practising her song, and the captain has asked her to serve tea in his cabin this afternoon!" supplemented Lida, laughing. "Is there anything funny in that—when you look at Rose?"

The Frenchman bowed.

"No, mademoiselle! When I look at her—you are right. It is not strange."

"When did you meet the marquis," Townshend asked Rose on their way up-stairs.

"The captain introduced him just after dinner last night. Isn't he charming? But did you ever see such hands? I like everything about him except his hands. He flourishes them about with more vanity than the vainest woman I ever saw. They would be lovely on a girl as small as Miss Schermerhorn, but on a full-grown man they are simply ridiculous. What could he do if attacked by a robber, or to save a woman from a burning building? I could crush both of them in one of mine, I think. But, if you can forget that one weakness, there is something very fascinating about him. He seems to be *au courant* with everything going on in the world of art. He and Shirley and I had a long talk together while you and Sir Arthur were smoking with papa."

"I told you you would like the French."

"Well, there is something different in their manner. Our American men make comrades of us. There is a deference in the manner of a Frenchman which is new

and delightful. It is rather nice to be put on a pedestal and—"

"And worshipped," supplemented Townshend.

"Well, I *was* going to say that," admitted Rose, frankly, "but I happened to think that the marquis did not worship. Only his manner indicated—indicated—"

She paused, blushing, and realizing that she was speaking too freely.

"I beg your pardon," said Townshend. "I am afraid *my* manner was too inquisitive. I betrayed you into saying more than you intended."

"I forgot that I was being so personal," said Rose, simply. "I take such an interest in people that I forget myself. I shall learn in time to be more reserved. I was made to feel in New York that all naturalness was underbred. How shall I find Paris?"

"You will find both London and Paris less rigid than New York, because their civilization is older. New York's smart society is still self-conscious and not perfectly sure of itself. But in London and Paris you may be as natural in your manner as you choose, and people will find your very naturalness charming."

"Really? I am so afraid of it! I always felt uncomfortable in New York, even after I was taken up and invited everywhere. I always felt that I was being inventoried."

"That was because they did not accept you wholly. You will see the difference at once in London. You will feel it. It is the difference between the real and the spurious. Society in London is so old, so established, that it can afford to do exactly as it pleases. New York is still only a generation or two away from its genesis, and it has not forgotten the humble origin of its grandfathers. Therefore it is narrow and bigoted. I have that fault to find with all American society. They never accept a man because he is a hero, or a woman

because she is fine. In five hundred years from now, I think I should like to live in New York. By that time it will have got to a point when it is unafraid."

"You are very reassuring," said Rose. "I hope I shall get on, to please my sister."

"What a pity they are going to sacrifice you to the little things of life!" said Townshend, suddenly. "You who could do so much that is worth while."

"Oh, don't say that! If you only knew how I long to go about and see people who are doing things! I want to see Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Nansen, and people who explore and invent. That is why I nearly go crazy over Kipling. He always writes of things that are! I wish I could have known Oliver Cromwell and Bismarck and Napoleon, and even Warren Hastings—although Burke was greater, because he could undo all that a great man had done and not stir out of his place. That is power. That is greatness. I wish I could have heard him make his speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts! I have read it a dozen times. *I* would have been one of those women who sat through his seven-day speech, and I would not have fainted away either. But as it is, all I can do is to organize a concert on board an ocean-liner for the benefit of the Sailor's Home!"

"Well, isn't that a fine thing to do?" asked Townshend. "You are a lovely young girl, using her charm and influence to make money for some of the greatest heroes who ever lived. It is not always the men who make speeches and explore and invent who are the great of this world. In the hold of this ship, in my opinion, there are heroes who are as brave as those who fought at Thermopylæ or Austerlitz, or in the battle of the Wilderness—men who would stand by their engines until the ship sank, or who would fall back and allow every passenger to be taken off before leaving their posts. Men who stand by their guns—those are my heroes. Some-

times one never knows their names; only that a fireman belonging to such and such a company rescued women and children from a burning building. No name, often not even a medal or the recognition of having his name spelled correctly in the morning papers, but in my mind every inch a hero, and the bravest of heroes at that."

"Ah," said Rose, "you believe, then, even in women heroes. They are the unsung heroes of the world—the heroes of the little things."

"Did you ever hear these lines?

"'"You who sail over the sea in ships,
Tall ships and strong ships and ships of renown,
When you go down
It's the talk of the town;
But nobody knows
When the little boat goes
And the fishermen drown.

"'"Lost or run down off the Banks in a fog—
Blinding, blank fog, on the fathomless sea,
Only the fright of a cry in the night
By the steamer's black side
And a boat's crew have died
Ere you knew them to be.
Driven and wrecked by the score on your coast—
Poor little boats in the wild winter's gale,
Poor frozen men
Who shall never again
Turn their white faces
Back to their places
Whence they set sail.

"'"Scant is the livelihood snatched from the sea,
Long is the labor and hard the men's lives,
Many are lost.
What is the cost?
Nobody knows
When the little boat goes
But the children and wives.'"

"Oh," cried Rose, with her cheeks kindling, "that is fine, and it was written by an American, too."

"Yes, you strange child. It was written by an American."

"Why am I strange? I don't see any harm being glad a beautiful thing has been done by one's countryman."

"No, of course there is no harm in it. It only struck me as surprising that the sentiment of a thing like that should appeal to you less than the nationality of its author."

"I can't help it. The appreciation of the sentiment goes hand in hand with my pride in the author and my desire to do him credit. Surely you can't object to that."

"On the contrary, I like it. I wish more Americans had your spirit. I wish the piracies of French plays could be stopped. I wish that the name of the dramatist could appear in as large type as the name of the chief actor. And so I apologize for laughing. You do quite right to honor the author, you ardent American. But now let me ask you before Sir Arthur reaches us, will you let me sit next to you at the concert to-morrow night?"

"Oh, I am sorry, but I have promised the Marquis d'Auteuil."

"Well," said Townshend, laughing, "for a Frenchman who has only been in America a few weeks, he is learning our ways rather rapidly."

But it so happened that at the concert so much had to be done behind the scenes that Rose only came into the audience two or three times, but wherever she went the Frenchman was her shadow. In vain Rose tried to send him back to his place in front. He was evidently bent upon taking advantage of all the freedom accorded young persons on shipboard, and he refused to leave her.

"How is it going?" she asked Sir Arthur, in one of the moments when she appeared in the audience.

"Very well, indeed. Miss Schermerhorn's little Scotchman performed with so much seriousness that she had to leave the room. She is out there on deck now with your brother. And the boat-race was quite the funniest thing I ever saw."

"I am so glad. How did the dancing go?"

"Beautifully. That little girl will create a furore in Paris. The dance she does with colored lights and those swirling skirts is quite marvellous."

"And she is an American," said Rose.

"Undoubtedly. You Americans have quite covered yourselves with glory to-night, especially you. When you came on in that white gown, leading Peter, you reminded me of Una and the Lion. I wish my father could have seen you. Did you train Peter yourself?"

"Quite! Quite! *Isn't* he clever? And wasn't he funny when they applauded him? At first he was frightened, but he knew when I put his locket on that I was pleased, and his military salute was so good. *Peter* is an American, too!"

Sir Arthur laughed and looked into the girl's charming face as if he were willing to admit that everything American were quite to his taste.

"What comes next?" asked Rose, looking at the programme that she had tacked to the wall in the companionway. "Oh, 'God Save the Queen.' You must go and sing with the English while I round up the stray Americans on deck and have them in their places for 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' There are a hundred and ninety-three of us and only sixteen of you, so go and sing your best."

The band struck up "God Save the Queen," and the English people all over the audience by twos and threes rose to their feet and sang valiantly. Even scattered as

they were they made a goodly volume of sound, and every word could be heard distinctly.

"That was fine!" cried Rose to Sir Arthur as she passed him a moment later. "I never heard the words to your hymn before. We always sing 'America' to it here."

There was a moment of hesitation when the opening bars of "The Star-Spangled Banner" rang out. One or two Americans started to rise, and Shirley Hollenden shouted:

"Everybody will please rise and sing 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'"

That was all that was necessary. In a moment some two hundred Americans were on their feet, and in a mighty burst of sound the first line rang out:

"Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?"

On the third line the singers palpably weakened. Men looked nervously at their wives, and mothers whispered to their children, "What's the next line?"

On the fifth line there were only about twenty people singing the words. The others were singing "tum-ti-tum" and "la-la-la." The band played louder in order to cover up the singers' deficiency.

On the seventh and eighth lines everybody remembered and sang at the tops of their voices:

"Oh, say does the star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

The Americans saw defeat staring them in the face, and would have been glad to sit down at the end of the first stanza, but the band, without waiting for orders, struck up the second, and only two voices responded—a beautiful tenor, Townshend's, and Rose's girlish so-

prano. Some of the others attempted to hum with them, but soon left off, and the two sang alone. Rose's cheeks were burning, but she sang steadily, and Townshend seconded her bravely, although it was a trying ordeal.

At the end of the second, most of the Americans drifted out of the doors nearest them.

"Is that enough?" whispered Townshend.

"No," she answered, sharply. "I am going to sing it all the way through!"

And she did, with Townshend's help. The English watched her with admiration, but when she finished there were not over half a dozen Americans left standing to support her. The others had either sat down or gone on deck.

As she finished singing she turned and faced the half-empty room with blazing eyes. The English and foreigners had remained through courtesy and applauded generously. But the girl's whole face quivered with shame and anger.

She walked down the aisle with her head held high. Townshend followed her, longing to say something to comfort her, but not daring. As she passed up the companionway she glanced at the programme she had tacked up there and it read:

"'God Save the Queen,' sung by the English.
"And God help
"'The Star-Spangled Banner,' sung by the Americans."

Some one had written in those three words.

CHAPTER XI

THE train from Calais, bearing the Hollenden party in a special car, was expected in Paris at six o'clock on a perfect summer day.

Maria, with her hideous little Bijou in her arms, who shivered perpetually even on so warm a day, drove down with Clemence in her hired victoria to meet her father and her new sister and brother, whom she never had seen.

From the presence of the Marquise d'Auteuil at the Gare St. Lazare she imagined that Raoul was expected also. But for the whole of a wretched week she had gone day after day to the hôtel of the marquise only to be refused admittance at the door without a word of explanation except the formula from Henri:

"Madame la Marquise does not receive to-day."

In vain she asked for the comtesse. In vain she wrote and sent tear-stained notes. The notes were answered in a phraseology so chilling that they were worse than silence.

In some manner Madame Lucie, the *concierge*, learned that the American was not being received by the family of her *fiancé*, and her treatment of Madame Clemence was hard to bear. They hurled defiance at each other when they met, and the triumphant air of the mother of Lili gave Clemence more concern than the attitude of the family d'Auteuil.

Maria was haggard and gray of face from anxious nights and weary days, and her tight cloth gown and

her liver-colored dog made her so piteous a figure that Clemence longed to keep her out of sight.

"Beware, mademoiselle," she said. "The marquise sits watching you, and I warn you to show no emotion at the sight of your *fiancé*. He will undoubtedly arrive by this train. The comtesse is driving down just back of us. Do not speak to the marquis, nor appear to notice him, unless he speaks first."

"We are the victims of a conspiracy," said Maria, opening her parched lips with difficulty.

The comtesse bowed so frigidly that Maria did not dare descend to speak to her. It was the first time Maria had seen her since the evening she had called.

A smart little brougham drove up, and a beautiful figure, heavily veiled and dressed in the deepest of Paris mourning, stepped out and vanished inside of the station. Clemence started.

"Pardon, mademoiselle," she said, "but let us descend and wait inside. The train is due in five minutes."

But, in spite of Clemence's cleverness, she could not obtain a glimpse of the face of the veiled woman. Only her figure was so beautiful Clemence was reasonably sure.

With a great clang the train rolled in. Out of the corner of her eye Maria saw Raoul embrace his sister and mother. But the car containing the Hollenden family was farther along. She passed the marquis, with her head up, going to meet a tall young girl who she knew must be Rose. But to her amazement, and no less to the astonishment of the tall young girl, the marquis paused just in front of Maria, turning from his mother and sister hurriedly, and saying in a low tone:

"Maria!"

"Courage, mademoiselle," hissed Clemence in her

ear, under pretence of taking the dog, which in her excitement Maria dropped.

The marquis took Maria's hand and raised it to his lips, at the same time giving her a look from his liquid brown eyes which brought a dull red to her cheeks.

The old marquise drew back perceptibly, but the comtesse, although speechless with fury, stepped to Maria's side and kissed her on the cheek. Rose colored with surprise. It was not two days since the marquis had proposed to her in London, and been refused. What could it mean ?

In an instant it was over—they had released her and gone, followed by Clemence and the veiled figure, and Maria was face to face with her family for the first time.

Clemence saw the mother and sister of the marquis drive off in the brougham, while he drove his own dog-cart. Just as he took the reins, the veiled figure spoke to him.

" Raoul !"

" Not here ! Not now, Lili !" he answered, glancing around hurriedly. " To-morrow evening at nine, at Armenonville."

Then the Hollendens appeared, Maria and Rose still looking at each other, Maria's head coming not quite to Rose's shoulder. Peter the Great marched solemnly at her side, held by a chain to his collar, and taking not the slightest notice of the shrill barking and mad jumps of Bijou, who quivered with rage and jealousy in Maria's arms.

Sir Arthur and Townshend took leave of them, and drove to their own apartments. Maria had engaged a suite of rooms at the Hôtel Continental for her father, her *entresol* not being large enough to hold so many.

" You are coming with us, are you not ?" Rose asked, in surprise, as Maria said good-bye.

" No, I shall dine alone, and leave you to recover from

your fatigue," answered Maria. "I will see you to-morrow."

"Nonsense, Maria!" said Shirley. "You will come down to-night. I shall come to fetch you at nine o'clock."

"Well, if you really wish for me," said Maria, much flattered, "I will come. You need not trouble to fetch me. I could not be seen driving with you alone until people know that you are my brother. Clemence will come with me. Good-bye, then, until nine!"

"Well, by Jove, I like *that!*" said Shirley. "Couldn't be seen driving with me alone until—well, what do you think of that, Miss Lida Schermerhorn?"

"I am not supposed to think," answered Lida, demurely. "She did not speak to me."

Shirley colored and said something which Lida did not hear. But she laughed.

"Don't mind *me*," she said, gayly. "I sha'n't go home and cry over it. I am not the weepy kind."

"I know you are not. You are the pluckiest little girl I ever saw, and I want you to know that I admire your bravery no end."

The girl colored and bit her lip.

"*That* sort of thing upsets me more than a snub from a cad," she said. "Don't ever say anything kind to me, and I can get on without whimpering. But just you dare to sympathize with me, and at once I shall turn into such a waterfall of tears from self-pity that not even a dam could stop me! I am used to nasty little slights."

"Oh, I am sure they don't come often," began Shirley, but Lida interrupted him.

"Now isn't that just like a man!" she exclaimed, derisively. "What do *you* know, you great big beautiful thing, that all the girls are crazy over because you can row and sail and ride and swim and shoot better than anybody else on earth—what do you know of

women's petty meannesses to each other? Stick to what you *know*, Shirley Hollenden, and don't rush in where angels fear to tread, because if you do you will tumble off your pedestal, and then we shall discover that you are no more than an ordinary man."

"You are always discovering that we are only ordinary men, or else why didn't you marry that English lord who went so mad about you three years ago?"

"I wish I had! Then I would have put my foot on your sister's neck and ground her into the gravel with my high heels!" cried the girl, viciously. "But he was little and watery-eyed and pimply, and I couldn't stand it even for the pleasure of walking all over Maria Hollenden. Ah, ha, how intimate she was with me that August at Hombourg! Yes, Rose, we are coming!"

"Shirley," said Rose, "would you mind taking Peter in a cab, and letting me take Lida in here with us?"

"Certainly not. Come along, Tzar of all the Russias. You look as solemn as an archbishop. Don't you know that we are in gay Paris, where you must be frivolous with the rest of us? And look here, Peter, if you will promise to eat up that nasty little rat-colored Bijou of my sister's the first time you are left alone with her, so that nobody can indict either one of us for conspiracy with intent to kill, I'll give you a whole necklace of gun-metal lockets with photographs of all the kings respectable enough to be hung on the same collar with your namesake."

Peter said nothing in reply, but took his seat in the little fiacre, much to the delight of the purple-faced *cocher* in the white-glazed hat.

The fine landau which held the other four swung slowly out of the long line of waiting carriages, and with the utter perversity of Paris cabmen, Shirley's *cocher* drove his horse directly in front of the others—or, as Shirley expressed it, sent a shot across their bow.

In an instant the two drivers struck at each other with their whips.

"Brother of a monkey!" shrieked the landau.

"Sister of a chicken!" screamed the fiacre.

The horses began to bite each other, and Peter stood up and thrust his nose under the coachman's arm.

"Mother of Mary!" howled the terror-stricken *cocher*, seeing the monster's head appear beside him, growling a keen desire to take a hand in the fight.

The coachman dropped the reins and tumbled off his seat under the feet of the landau horses, and a gendarme came along and pulled him out, arrested both drivers, and took the names of the whole party.

"I *like* Paris!" cried Shirley, when they finally started. Peter's lethargy, too, was broken up. He sat up and began to take notice.

Rose invited Lida to dine with them at the Hôtel Continental before going to her *pension* in the rue de Clichy. Their carriage was behind Shirley's cab, but they soon overtook him, because his coachman had again been arrested for driving over a bicyclist. Shirley was leaning back at his ease smoking his pipe and holding Peter back.

"Don't mind me!" cried Shirley. "We've been arrested again. Nobody hurt, but a good wheel smashed, and Peter's fighting blood up. If anything else happens, look for Peter. You'll find my dead body dragging behind him in his pursuit of Paris coachmen, the white-hatted variety preferred."

As they were alighting in front of the Hôtel Continental, with no less than twenty servants swarming around the rich American family, and the *directeur* welcoming them in person, chattering charming French polite inquiries for the health of each member of the party, and condolences for the heat and fatigue of the

journey, Rose heard Peter's deep bay down the street coming nearer and nearer.

"Listen to Peter!" she cried. "What can have happened to make him bark so?"

Just then Shirley's cab dashed up, with both Shirley and Peter standing up and furiously haranguing the crazed *cocher*, Shirley's voice in one ear and Peter's bark in the other. The *cocher's* eyes were bulging from his head and his face was streaming with sweat.

"Ran over a dog, and got arrested again. Three times in one course. I pay one franc seventy-five and I get a thousand dollars' worth of excitement. Horse fell down twice, and Peter on the verge of nervous prostration."

He paid the cabman, with many sarcastic compliments on his excellent driving, and in a fine fury the man lashed his horse, turned him without looking, and ran full-tilt into an omnibus.

A Paris cabman makes it a rule never to look around before he turns his horse. He can determine what is behind him with more accuracy by running into it.

By the intervention of a miracle no one was hurt, but the horse, trembling, cut about the knees, covered with foam and blood, stood in the wreck of the harness, while the coachman swore and struck him over the head with a piece of the shaft.

Rose snatched Peter's chain from Shirley and rushed to the curb-stone. Peter tugged wildly, but Rose was strong.

"If you strike that horse another blow," she cried, "I will set my dog on you!"

The man dropped the shaft and stared at her in terror.

Shirley and Mr. Hollenden moved nearer to her, in case she needed their help, but offered neither remonstrance nor advice. A young Frenchman who was

passing listened in astonishment, and pretended to bargain with a cabman in order to hear more.

"Bring that horse here and let me see him!" was Rose's next order.

The gendarme permitted the man to obey her. Rose examined the trembling creature and the indignant color flamed into her cheeks.

"He is very badly injured," she said to the gendarme. "What will they do with him?"

"In all probability, mademoiselle, they will send him to the doctors of the medical college for vivisection. They will pasture him until they need him."

Rose gave a little cry.

"Oh, what brutes men can be! Shirley, buy this horse for me and have him mercifully shot! I can't bear to think of this poor thing being tortured. It makes me ill! It makes me ill!"

"Go on in, Rose, I will ask them to let me shoot him, and the first shot will end his suffering. Go in and try to forget him. Remember, I will shoot him myself! Now go!"

CHAPTER XII

In the hôtel of the Comtesse de Brissy, she and the marquise waited anxiously in the salon for Raoul to descend and explain himself. Both were reasonably sure of the explanation of his conduct on the platform of the Gare St. Lazare, yet they longed to hear it from his own lips.

He came in hurriedly, shaking his handkerchief from its folds with an ineffably graceful movement of his beautiful hands, kissed his mother on the cheek and passed his arm around his sister's waist. When dinner was announced, he offered his arm to the marquise and led her to the dining-room with real affection. Even the comtesse relaxed and listened to his animated description of his travels. As long as the servants remained he confined his conversation to amusing details and left the real issue until they could be alone.

"We were so much amused by your letter, my son," said the marquise. "Tell us more about your American experiences."

"Ah, maman, you never would believe me if I should tell you of some of them. I went, as I wrote you, directly to Denver, to verify certain reports, and then came back by the way of Chicago. You remember Chicago, do you not, my darling, where they held that monstrous exhibition? Very well. It is a hideously ugly spot, gloriously situated upon the shores of a beautiful fresh-water ocean, so vast that one would be justified in thinking it the sea. But in some twenty miles of coast, along

which the city lies, there is not one thought in the minds of the most artistic citizen towards beautifying that wonderful shore-line. Along half of it, quadruple tracks of a monopolist railway of suburban service ruin the view, while hundreds of trains daily belch forth smoke and cinders upon the uncomplaining residents and fill the air with screeches, whistles, and the endless bell-ringing of a tireless railway service. The breakwater is decayed and unsightly. The piers lower down in the city are plain and render the harbor hideous. It is an immense commercial centre, more ships sailing into the harbor, I am told, than into any other port in the world. But there is not an atom of beauty anywhere. No statues to speak of, no public fountains worth mentioning, miles of boulevards leading nowhere, streets more filthy than those of Constantinople, and a general air of 'Somebody else must attend to these defects. I haven't time.' In Chicago I noticed this particularly. There is nowhere to go. To the theatres, yes. And very good ones. But for a ride, for a drive, on one's wheel, where in God's name can one go for a glass of wine and a biscuit ? To a saloon, where one leans over a marble counter and orders ' a drink ' which is seldom as innocent as wine. Or to a country club, where one must either be a member or have been put up for a fortnight by a friend. But there are no concert-gardens where one may take a lady, no open-air cafés, nothing innocent or rural. One will not find that in any part of America that I visited, except a few here and there in the East. In the West they are too young and too commercial to have thought of beautifying, and they love art only inasmuch as they can own it.

" Chicago is the home of the enormous Stock-Yards, and I must have been quite different from the ordinary run of travellers, for upon my refusal to visit the slaughter-houses the newspapers heralded my arrival with these words in head-lines :

"'REFUSES TO VISIT STOCK-YARDS!

"'French Nobleman Declines to Witness Slaughter—
Declares his Visit to be Purely Social.'

"To which some journals took exception and others applauded. Some declared me to be a French snob. Others regarded it as evidence of taste, and interviewed me daily upon my opinion of the art of Chicago. *Mon Dieu!* The art of Chicago as evidenced by one Art Institute, indifferently patronized, and miles of indiscriminate architecture. For the rest, badly paved streets, a net-work of surface tram-cars, both trolley and cable, and dirt in unspeakable quantities everywhere. I could but temporize with the enterprising reporters who dogged my footsteps, for to criticise anything in America unfavorably means eternal damnation at the hands of the press, who possess an unheard-of license in the way of personal journalism. If our editors dared to go as far there would be duels every day."

"Disgusting," murmured the marquise. "But it quite bears out what Sophie de Briancourt has told me of her visit to that ridiculously pretentious country."

"By-the-way, Raoul," said his sister, "the Duchesse de Briancourt is just now able to see a few of her friends. You must not delay in paying your respects to her."

The young man's face flushed and he crumbled his bread nervously.

"Indeed I must. What a pity that I could not have seen those ruffians who trod her down in that dreadful fire! They tell me that she saw none of their faces—recognized none of them."

"Quite true. She has never mentioned a name—"

"But little Claire St. James? She was outside the window. She must have seen some of them?"

"No, the Baronne Valencia says that Claire was un-

conscious from her broken arm and the shock of falling. It is whispered that some one struck her on the head, but of course no one speaks out," said the comtesse.

" How difficult for Alexandre to bear !" said the marquise. " He rages at his impotence to avenge his mother. He is such a brave man, and so full of pride and fire."

" You are sure she saw no one, recognized no one ?" repeated Raoul.

" Quite sure."

" Ah, what a pity ! What a pity !"

" Will this interminable dinner never be over ?" murmured the comtesse, as the servants left the room. " Henri has made it into a banquet to celebrate your arrival."

" Tell us more of your experiences, my son. To be sure we are impatient to hear of your private affairs, nevertheless we must contain ourselves. Your letters were extremely diverting, especially your descriptions of the objectionable American women."

" Are they all alike ?" asked the comtesse.

" Not exactly," answered Raoul. " For example, the young girls of Chicago and New York differ somewhat from those farther west. They observe what we call the proprieties more—outwardly, at least. At heart I am convinced that all American women are lawless, or, rather, a law unto themselves. They love to decoy a man to the verge of declaring himself, honorably or otherwise, and then drawing themselves up with a fine show of virtue and demanding innocently to know what he means ! There is an element of cruelty in the character of the American woman in her dealings with men, born of two things. One is the chivalrous treatment women receive, with scarcely an exception, from all men, which has completely spoiled them, and the other is their ignorance of real life. They are like children—precocious, pert, bad-mannered children—who love to

pretend that they know everything, but who are at heart quite innocent and virtuous from our point of view. They lack soul and they lack feeling. Otherwise they are irresistibly fascinating. Their cleverness is never profound. It is always on the surface, yet most of them are beautiful or distinguished-looking, and all are well dressed. Their clothes are in phenomenally good taste, and the excellent effect they produce is quite guiltless of the materials which a Frenchwoman would use to produce a similar effect—namely, that of a perfectly dressed and elegant woman. They respect Nature more than we do. They permit their hair to turn gray, which it does quite early in that climate, and they have the wit to know that nothing is more striking than gray hair, beautifully dressed, around a youthful face. They are much less artificial than our women in their make-up, and this tends to carry out a certain aspect of innocence in the character of the American woman, which is calculated to bring out in a European a desire to protect her, to befriend her. It may be that it stirs that pity which is akin to love, for the American woman is always positive in her effect upon a European. He may hate, or he may love. He cannot be indifferent to her. But Heaven pity the man who voices this chivalrous sentiment I have described! The American woman will permit herself to be worshipped, adored, desired, but never pitied by a mere man. Her arrogance in this matter has been fostered by generations of willing homage, and the American man will never be master in his own home until he learns the lesson from a European that women ought to be controlled, protected, even bullied a little if they and he wish to live their lives in the proper relation of the sexes. Both would be happier if this were so, for as it is now, the woman is discontented because she is rudderless and has no use for her liberty. The man is unhappy because he is neglected and treated

with disrespect, and the position of each is anomalous."

"Come," said the comtesse, "have your cigarette in the salon. I am all interest, all attention! How well you have studied your subject, and what excellent use you have made of your time!"

"As long as I am to marry an American, I considered that I was doing the wisest thing," said Raoul.

"But which one? Why did you kiss Maria's hand? Explain yourself!" cried the comtesse.

Raoul laughed at his sister's impatience, and pushed his mustaches upward from his white and pointed teeth.

"Because I failed to secure the other one. Did you see her? Is she not a beauty?"

"Ah, you love her, Raoul!" exclaimed the comtesse.

"I am not at all sure that I love her. In fact, I do not. I only know that I want her. She is adorable—except for the fact that she has refused me!"

"Refused you! She? Did you speak to *her*?"

"In the American custom—yes. I asked her to marry me in London. We remained there several days. These Americans received much attention on account of Sir Arthur Carteret's introductions. He is in love with her; also an American named Townshend, both fellow-passengers. She seems to favor neither of them, but *me* she has refused!"

"Then you will be obliged to take Maria!" said the comtesse, with a groan.

"Console yourself," said the brother. "Maria will, for our purposes, be more tractable than Rose. Maria is imbued with European customs. She respects the nobility. She adores our family—"

"And she loves *you!*" cried the comtesse, maliciously.

"*Mon Dieu!* What makes you think so?" asked the young man, in horror.

"She admitted it quite frankly to us here one night just before we received your cablegram. Since then we have not received her at all. We thought it less compromising. One can explain away absolute silence, but never utterances, no matter how non-committal, nor evasions, no matter how impalpable. I knew the moment you spoke to Maria that your plans with the other had failed. Now, all we shall have to do is to explain to Maria that—that we wished to give her time for reflection; that we did not wish to coerce her!"

Raoul laughed, but the marquise said:

"One thing which irritates me so much with these unspeakable Americans is that they make Eugénie so malicious, and even I am obliged to stoop to measures which I scorn in a d'Auteuil."

"My proud little maman!" laughed Raoul, kissing her fondly. "I honor you for your disdain. But let us hope that the preliminaries will soon be over. I am impatient to embrace my fair bride!"

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" laughed his sister. "Poor, poor Raoul!"

CHAPTER XIII

IN the Bois, not far beyond the fortifications of Paris, there are many delightful cafés where one may stop and take some refreshment, and listen to the band. The most fashionable of these is the Pavillon d'Armenonville, where every evening from early spring-time until the chill in the autumn air drives people to firesides, the garden is filled with the most cosmopolitan gathering to be found in all Paris.

Armenonville is one of the few places where Americans and smart Parisians sit next each other, and where, not far from either, celebrated composers, or famous professional beauties, may eat their little red ices and drink their long, cooling drinks.

It is here that the famous Tzigane band plays whose leader fiddled himself into the affections of the Princesse de Chimay. His place is taken by one with almost Rigo's charm, for every night his music thrills an audience made up of all sorts and conditions of men, who gladly drop their francs into the plate which circulates among the listeners every time the audience changes.

Some come for their coffee after they have dined elsewhere. Some spend the entire evening over cigars. Some women come for the famous *glace framboise*, which is made better at Armenonville than anywhere else in all Paris. Some dine here, either in one of the private dining-rooms up-stairs, through whose open windows the diners can hear the music from the garden below, or on the enormously wide veranda walled in by glass.

On this veranda, at the corner table nearest the band, a dinner-party of some twenty persons was engaged in discussing the advent of the Hollendens. The hostess was an American, but she called herself the Marquise Hennessy. Up to the time she turned Catholic and presented the Pope with a generous check for the benefit of the Church, she had lived in the American colony in the rue de Chaillot as Mrs. Laurence W. Hennessy, but her title was thoroughly fresh and Roman, and people used it and marquised her and ate her dinners and drank her champagne complacently.

She was an old woman with a beautifully rounded back. Her wig was blonde and wavy, her cheeks rouged and enamelled, and when the front of her gowns was well filled in with tulle, she made an excellent appearance.

The Marquis Larry Hennessy spoke his French with somewhat the brogue of a bricklayer, but there was an irresistible twinkle in his blue eyes which made you like him at once, and once liking him, you never got over it.

There were some very nice people at this dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Bobbie Scott, of Philadelphia, were there. There was nothing at all to be said against Mrs. Scott that was her fault. She had been the governess to Bobbie's little nieces when Bobbie fell in love and very properly married her. But although they had no end of money, the Crayton Scotts, whose governess she had been, were leaders in society, and nobody called on Mrs. Bobbie. So they came to Paris for two years, got to know the nobility around the Arc de Triomphe, and then went back to Philadelphia, where they were received with open arms by the very people who had refused to come to their wedding two years before.

Then there was the Comte de Cassé, with his *belle amie*, Lady Gregory, a beautiful Englishwoman, who spoke French more exquisitely than many a French-

woman, and who would not give her husband a divorce because she was determined that he should never be able to marry the woman whom he had had the impudence to bring into her house. Everybody knew how she had left her London house in the midst of her ball, taking only her maid with her.

The Comte de Cassé was one of the most delightful of Frenchmen, and secretly objected very strongly to the Americans as a nation, saying truly, " How can we ever hope to understand them ?" But being very honestly and sincerely in love with Lady Gregory, he obediently followed wherever she led, and so found himself at the dinner of the Marquise Hennessy. And as for Lady Gregory—" He is an angel, my dear," she said of him to Mrs. Bobbie Scott—" simply an angel. When you do find a good Frenchman, he is the best man in the world." Whereat Mrs. Bobbie laughed hugely, but admired Lady Gregory more than ever on account of her sincerity and her very damaging frankness.

Mrs. Farnsworth was an American widow, a real widow, although they are scarce in Paris, and there was no particular reason for her living there except that she did not have enough money to live at home, but on the same amount in Paris she could dress exquisitely and get on famously in the American colony.

But the cleverest woman of all was the Baronne Valencia. She was a New Orleans woman, and had married a Spaniard who had the grace to die, lamented by none.

The baronne had a château in Touraine, very near to Vrianault, and she knew everybody all over the world who were worth knowing. Since her marriage she had been presented at five courts ; she spoke seven languages, and she possessed, above all, a sense of humor. That was why she was at Armenonville at this dinner of the Marquise Hennessy.

At her right hand sat the young Duc de Briancourt. When he looked in astonishment at her for being present, and said, "What are you doing here?" she had answered him—"And what are *you* doing here?" and then they both laughed. The duc admired the baronne intensely, but she, having had one foreign husband, understood him.

"What would your mother say if she knew that you were here?" asked the baronne.

"She would be very indignant, but as she is not yet able to leave her bed, I am in no danger of her discovering it."

"Your poor mother! Her nervous shock has proved almost as serious as if she really had been burned. Does she improve at all?"

"Very slowly. She cannot fall asleep for even an hour that she does not waken screaming that the people are treading her to death. In her lucid moments she refuses to divulge the names of those cowards who climbed upon her shoulders to reach the window, knowing, of course, that I would challenge one or all of them, and also for the reason that my dear mother is not only a Briancourt but a Chartres. But from her ravings we know that some were among her dearest acquaintances. I cannot force my obstinate tongue to apply the sacred name of friend to those men who beat down my mother and climbed through that window by means of those beautiful white shoulders of hers which I have only seen carrying a burden of lace and jewels! I have sat by her bedside for hours, hoping to discover a clew, but, even in her delirium, her lips are sealed in that one particular. It seems as if even her poor dazed brain felt that there was one secret which it must guard as a point of honor."

"I was there," said the baronne. "I heard her screams, and I *saw* those who trod her down!"

"You saw them? You saw them? You know their names? You must tell me! Ah, *you* will not refuse me! At last I shall have my revenge! Ah, my friend, how can I ever thank you. Tell me! Tell me at once! I am so impatient to hear!"

The baronne's lips curled.

"You think, Monsieur le Duc de Briancourt, that because I am an American, because I am neither a Chartres nor a Briancourt, that I cannot have the heart of a noblewoman! You ask *me* to turn informer and perform an ignoble act which you have just boasted that your mother was too high-minded to descend to! Thank you for the unconscious expression of your regard for my character, my friend! Thank you a thousand times for your polite request—but no!"

The young man's face flushed. He pressed his serviette nervously to his lips once or twice before he replied. The baronne's hand trembled as she lifted her wine-glass.

"I beg your pardon!" he said, at last. And then again, "I beg your pardon!"

His tones were so sincere that the baronne's brow cleared.

"We must learn to bear such unconscious insults—we Americans—without resentment, I suppose. But they hurt, duc, they hurt!"

"I do not know why it is," answered the young man, simply. "I never intend to wound any one at all, most of all, you, my adored friend, but one never thinks of ascribing either nobility or honor to your nation, and I am continually forgetting that you *are* an American."

"I am still an American at heart, and I cannot bear to have a man of your intelligence think so lightly of us."

"I judge by what I see," answered the Frenchman, glancing around the table of his American hostess with a shrug. "*Rastaquouéres*, most of them, Those who

are not are frivolous, bad-mannered, and incapable of thought. Their only virtue is that they know how to give dinners, and their wines are unexcelled. This Château Yquem is like liquid gold."

"Listen to me. I have lived nearly all my life in Europe. I can only remember my girlhood in America, but the South is filled with the romance and love of the bold and chivalrous cavaliers and their descendants. I can remember the honest, clean love-making of those young Southern men who flocked around my sister and me as bees around their queen. *You* would be horrified at the freedom which was accorded us—long, happy days alone together, longer evenings spent in swinging in hammocks, driving about in the sweet summer darkness, boating, picnicking, dancing, entirely unchaperoned, never needing one, and perfectly safe in the chivalry of our Southern men. The chivalry of the South is the real chivalry. There a man protects a woman from even himself. Here a man rescues a woman from one danger only to place her in a worse one, and will protect her from every man but himself. But a lifetime of Europe has changed all that for me. I would not allow my daughter to go even to her grandfather's homestead and have the liberty her mother had. She would not know what to do with it. I would not trust my son to go there and have the freedom of the other young American fellows. My friends' daughters would not be safe with him. And yet, being as thoroughly Europeanized as I am, the insults put upon me by my husband's family, their cruel demands upon me for money, the knowledge that even though I had restored to them their estates in Spain, their sacred burying-ground, and their thrice sacred dead, yet all the time I was still an alien, still 'the American' to them—never 'daughter,' or 'sister'—all this has kept me an American at heart. And so I grieve when I hear that an eager

young soul like the girl in the rich American family we are asked here to discuss, is coming to France for a title, for it means disillusionment, chagrin, mortification, dissembling to her family and friends, and in the end heart-break for herself."

"You know her, then?" said the duc.

"Yes, I know her. Two years ago I was in America on business, and I took her down to New Orleans with me, together with three other young girls, for Mardi Gras. She created a perfect furore, although she was so young. There was an American man-of-war in the harbor at the time, and they gave a dance on board, ostensibly for me, but in reality it was for Rose Hollenden. She danced nearly all night with such freshness, such enthusiasm, that I was delighted, and through it all she was so unconscious of the charm she exercised upon young and old that even I thought it marvellous. She is an original. She will shock you all horribly, but she is a rare soul. Her unconventionality comes from unconsciousness of self, which to me, after these fluttering, flushing, shyly demure French girls, is a delight."

"Have you heard about Lulu and Francine de Fleury?" asked the duc.

"No. What have they done?"

"Well, they have learned English, and have read some American novels, and now they have declared war on French customs. Once every week they inform the duchesse that they are going shopping, *comme les Américaines*. They wear American clothes, and come to town alone and lunch at cafés alone, and go to the shops, and Heaven knows where, and come home delighted with their freedom. It is of no use for the duchesse to send a maid, or to try to follow them herself. They bribe the maids and trick their mother, and declare for American freedom."

The baronne laughed.

" Poor Duchesse de Fleury !" she said. " I can imagine her fluent denunciation of my nation. But, alas ! that is not American freedom. That is American license, and you French can never be made to understand that America is so totally different as to be inexplicable to you. That would be quite proper in America—I mean for two young girls to go shopping alone. They often do lunch alone in the most elegant restaurants, but of that, personally, I do not approve, and the best element in American society shares my prejudices."

" What will be the ideas of this rich young girl when she arrives in Paris ?"

" She will expect to be surrounded by beaux as she has been at home. She will, I am afraid, bring her ideas of American freedom to French soil, where they will wither and die."

" You think she will wish to be surrounded by men, this ' rare soul,' as you call her ?" said the Frenchman, in a shocked voice.

The baronne laughed.

" To be surrounded by men in American society is no insult, as it is here. Again, I must beg you to remember that all men are not French, and that there is a nation whose men can approach a woman without poisoning her with their thoughts. In Paris, to say of a Frenchwoman that in society she is always surrounded by men is generally equivalent to saying, ' *Elle a beaucoup de tempérament.*' But in America, to be surrounded by men, to excite little rivalries and jealousies, to be obliged to divide dances among three or four eager aspirants, to wear flowers from one man and carry the bouquets of several others, so to tease and tantalize the men that they are driven nearly to despair or raised to a pinnacle of bliss by frowns or smiles, all these constitute the innocent coquetry of the young girls in my

country—and the more lovers one has, the more of a belle and a toast she is in the South. Here—here such a course would declass her at once. But an American girl never can be brought to understand that it is no compliment to be surrounded by men. She turns in loathing from the real truth, and, in the innocence of her own mind, forgets from hour to hour the warnings given her that no Parisian can entertain the slightest sentiment for a woman which is not at the same time an insult to her womanhood. They try to believe it, but they forget—they are so accustomed to the innocent, chivalrous love of their American lovers."

"America must be very stupid," observed the duc.

"On the contrary, with your sensitive nature, your delight in brilliant dialogue, your love of beauty, you would adore some of my countrywomen. You would find them lacking in this particular, however. You love art for its inherent qualities. They love it, or seek it rather, from curiosity, a restless craving to be *au courant*, and from a love of ownership. Thus comparatively few Americans care for a copy of a work of art, no matter how fine. They want the original, and if the newspapers every now and then will print a paragraph stating the owners of certain gems, with the price paid, they will cut it out and feel tremendously flattered thereby. *You* care to see a statue in order to learn it by heart and to carry it with you in your mind's eye. That is the chief difference between Anglo-Saxon women of fashion and continental society. Here to be a woman of fashion means that one is surrounded by all that is best in literature and art and music and politics. In America it means simply—*clothes!* We do not really honor our own explorers or scientific discoverers or artists for any reason except curiosity. And we never even give them the one dinner which curiosity prompts unless they have been recognized by Paris or London newspapers first.

Americans treat music and fine paintings and lovely statues to far less of real interest than they accord to terrapin and champagne. So that you would be distressed by all this at first. But if you were so fortunate as to become acquainted with the frank, clever, true American character which lies beneath the frivolity, you might meet some fine men whose love you would wear in your soul as its choicest treasure, and you might find a woman who would give you that gift which is rarer than love, friendship — a friendship which would give you a new insight into life, it would be so frank, so piquant, so daring and yet so crystal."

"I have heard," said Mrs. Farnsworth, the real widow, "that this Rose Hollenden has never had any education to speak of. I heard that she talked through her nose and used bad grammar. She hails from the Pacific coast, doesn't she? I suppose she is provincial, then, and says 'I seen' and all those sort of things."

The baronne covered her lips with her handkerchief.

"What a pity you do not use your English more," she murmured to the duc. "Mrs. Farnsworth meant 'English' when she said 'grammar' and 'that sort of thing' for 'those sort.' Imagine that woman commenting on Rose Hollenden!"

"Why, there is the Marquis d'Auteuil!" said Mrs. Bobbie Scott. "I don't know him, but I've seen him driving. He is the one with the beautiful hands which are painted so often. I wish I knew him! I would like to go back to America and say that I knew The Man With the Hands."

"*I* know him," said the Marquise Hennessy. "He is a great favorite of mine—almost as much of a favorite as the Duc de Briancourt!"

"Thank you, marquise!" said the young man, bowing. Then to the baronne he muttered:

"It is so foolish of Raoul to arrange a rendezvous here. It is too public."

"You think she is here?"

"I saw her enter that small pavilion on the left. Ah, he caught my signal. What a pity that all these people have seen him!"

"Why?"

"Why, because he intends to marry your Mademoiselle Hollenden. He went to America to investigate her fortune and returned on the same ship with them."

"The Marquis d'Auteuil! The Marquis d'Auteuil!" gasped the baronne, looking curiously at the duc. Then she added, "Never! He shall never marry Rose!"

"Who will prevent it?" asked the young man.

"I shall, if it cannot be managed otherwise."

"Are you saving her for me?"

"No," said the baronne, gently. "Much as I care for you, my friend, much as I admire your charming qualities of mind and your excellent heart, I would not like to see that bonnie girl marry any European."

"There goes Calvé," said the Marquis Larry Hennessy.

"And there is the editor of *Figaro* just in front of Yvette Guilbert. Last night she was singing at the Café des Ambassadeurs," said the Duc de Briancourt. "And ah, there comes my young American girl who bought a cab-horse last night in front of the Hôtel Continental!"

"What? What do you say? Why, that is Rose! Where did you see her? Tell me about it instantly. See, isn't she lovely? She has Sir Arthur Carteret and her brother with her. That little white-haired man must be her father. I never have seen him. But what an atrocious maid she has to carry her dog. And how can Rose allow her to dress in that manner."

"That isn't her dog," said the duc. "Her dog is—"

"And that isn't her maid. It is her sister—the one who lives in the *entresol* of the Comtesse de Brissy's apartment-house in the rue Marbeuf," interrupted Mrs. Farnsworth.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* and is that poor creature Maria Hollenden?" murmured the baronne. "Her ugliness is more than pathetic. It is tragic."

"If that is your Mademoiselle Hollenden, your lovely American Rose, I begin to understand her somewhat," said the duc.

"I heard," said Mrs. Farnsworth, "that she is so proud of her father's wealth that she stops any horse she takes a fancy to and buys it from the curb-stone, no matter who the owner. I heard that she loved a sensation above everything, and stopped at nothing in order to gain it."

"I heard that she allowed her dog to attack a cab-driver who had offended her, and that she would have been arrested if her brother hadn't bribed a gendarme," said Lady Gregory.

"I heard that she refused to be seen driving with her sister from the station, but took her maid and a friend in the carriage with her, and sent her brother and sister home in common cabs," said the Marquise Hennessy.

"I know that she did buy a cab-horse last night in front of her hôtel," said the Duc de Briancourt, "for I was there and saw her."

The baronne listened disdainfully to these rumors.

"Do tell us about it," said the Comte de Cassé.

"Well, her dog is the most magnificent specimen of a German bloodhound that I ever saw! Her brother very kindly took him in a cab to the hôtel, but had a *cocher* more unskilled than usual, who ran into and over several persons and so injured his horse that the poor brute ought to have been shot. Evidently this young American girl understands horses, for she looked him over,

made the *cocher* stop beating him, and asked what was to be done with him. The gendarme said he would probably be sold to the doctors for vivisection. With that this glorious young girl, who had managed the enraged *cocher*, her fine dog, and the whole situation with dignity and courage, sank back with a cry of compassion and fell to trembling so for pity of a poor, miserable Paris cab-horse, that I was ready to offer my life in her defence! She was so beautiful and in such distress. She stretched out her hand to her brother and said something in English, which afterwards I heard was a request to buy him for her and have him shot without delay. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the true report. May I have the honor of offering a toast to the courage of that young girl—to her courage and to her compassion!"

"You are charming, my friend, perfectly charming," whispered the baronne. "Let us excuse ourselves and go to speak with them."

"Ah, those Americans! They eat each other like wolves," answered the duc, as he strolled at her side.

The Hollendens were the centre of attraction at a modest little table in the middle of the garden. Rose had just demanded with a generous coin dropped in the Tzigane's plate, for him to repeat the "Sourire d'Avril" waltz they had been playing, when she turned and saw the baronne. Without pausing to think, the young girl sprang up and flung her arms round her friend, holding her in a close embrace with her cheek pressed to the baronne's. Then she held her off at arm's-length and looked at her with such sincere affection that the older woman felt a pang of pity for her fresh young enthusiasm. The baronne knew what Paris does for the soul.

"Come!" cried Rose. "I want to walk about and see things, and Maria won't! You have chaperoned me

too many times to flinch now! How fascinating Paris is! How many things there are to see and hear! The music and laughter and general gayety intoxicate me. I feel as if I were walking on air. Who says Paris is wicked and full of blackness and vice? It is like a Great White City. It is so clean and sweet. And oh, the beauty, the beauty of it! I can't look in any direction that is not lovely! Why did no one tell me how I would adore it?"

"I did," said Townshend, "but you would not believe me."

"I believe you now!" cried Rose. "Let us leave the others a few moments and you and the baronne take me over there. I want to go up there where you were dining. I want to *see* things."

The others laughed and let her go. Rose was quite unconscious of the curious comments upon her as she looked with such eager enthusiasm into the upturned faces of the men and women who sat at the little tables by which she passed. Her rose-colored skirts trailed softly after her and her great beauty drew the eyes of the men after her irresistibly.

"What is over there?" she said.

"Let us take her," whispered Townshend, leading the way at the baronne's side. "She is too innocent to understand all that she sees. It gives me a pang to find that she will go to all these places. It is of no use to deny her. She has already asked me to take her to the Neuilly Fair and to the Isle de Puteau for tennis and to the Folies-Bergère, because a little American dancer crossed with us who is to dance there. I took her about in New York and London for a few days, and when I hinted very delicately that I could not do it here, she gave me one clear, reproachful look from those fearless American eyes of hers, and I have not dared to repeat my warning. But it breaks my heart to refuse her

anything. Or to have her know Paris," he added, in a low tone.

The baronne glanced up at him.

"You love her," she said.

Townshend took off his hat.

"I do," he said, simply.

"Ah, I am so glad!" she said, clapping her hands softly. "Not because you are my cousin, but because you will save her from a French marriage."

"You do not know her, or you would feel as I often do, that I have no chance with her, because I cannot 'do things.' She wants a hero."

"I may not know her, but I know you, and I know that you *will* marry her. You never have failed in anything *yet*, Sterling!"

"Well, I fully intend to ask her," answered the man, steadily. "Where is she? Can she hear us?"

"No, she has stopped to button her glove. Let us wait for her."

"Well, what shall I do about taking her to these places?"

"Take her, by all means! I will invite both of you to go with me."

"But to all Paris?" cried Townshend. "Think what you are undertaking. You have too many affairs of your own."

"Would it bore *you* to go with her?" asked his cousin. "*You* have been to all these places."

"But I love her," he answered, quietly.

"And I," said the baronne. "I, too, love her, and therefore she will make these old places seem new and strange and fresh to me, as she will to you. Love will do that always, either for man or woman."

Rose saw them waiting for her, yet still she stood apparently buttoning her glove. They were very patient, she reflected, and though only a few steps of sum-

mer darkness separated them, yet she could not drag her feet from where she stood, paralyzed by fragments of a conversation which emanated from one of the tiny pavilions of the other side of the garden from the band and the diners.

The music of the "Sourire d'Avril," played as only those Tziganes can play, came faintly to her ears. Rose never heard that waltz afterwards without remembering Armenonville.

One voice she recognized as Raoul d'Auteuil's, which said, as she was passing:

"But if I will place her rich brother Shirley in your power, will you give me back my notes? Consider, it may be years before I can pay them. I may never get so much money."

"Ah, but you do not understand," said a woman's voice. "It is you I love; not the money! Consider what a love I give you! Can any other woman give so much? Who else will adore you as I? Think of the love I have cast aside for yours! Who else will admire your beautiful features and care for your exquisite hands as I do? What other woman will kneel at your feet as I have knelt, and as I will kneel again—I, who love you so! Ah, Raoul! Raoul! Consider well before you cast such a love aside. Consider well before you make me your enemy. Is it money that you wish? See, I have plenty. I was rich before I knew you. I will take care of you again, and never give the money a thought. I will burn the notes before your eyes. I will be your slave if only you will give up this odious American marriage!"

"Oh, my adored one! Why do you make it so hard for me? If you really loved me as you say, you would save me. My debts are enormous. Disgrace and ruin stare me in the face. I must have millions, not thousands, and it would beggar you to pay my debts. Allow

me to make this marriage. It shall be one of form only. Let me take the sister and you take the brother just long enough to enrich ourselves. It is you only whom I love! You only who are enshrined in my soul! Be generous and save me, my beautiful one! My love!"

Raoul's voice shook with feeling wholly new to Rose. He had never pleaded with *her* in such tones.

"No, no! You are deceiving me! I know you men. You always promise and promise, but marriage destroys women like me. The establishment, the wife, the child count more with you than love. Even the brown water-rat will be more to you than your poor Lili."

"Come, come, little one. Be thankful that I am not going to marry the tall, beautiful sister, who might rival you. Cheer up, and promise to accept the rich brother, and give me back those notes, and for the rest, it will adjust itself."

"Come, Rose, let me help you, dear," called the baronne, coming towards her. "Why, how cold your hand is, my child! And your arm! And even your cheeks! You ought never to have come out in that thin gown! Get her wrap, Sterling, and order her something hot and spiced to drink. Come, Rose, walk a little faster, child. You are so white, I am afraid you have got a chill."

"Well," said Sir Arthur, as he covered her shoulders with her wrap and seated himself at her side, "are you beginning to realize Paris?"

"Yes," said Rose, quietly. "I have been here but twenty-four hours, yet I am beginning to realize Paris."

CHAPTER XIV

"CHILDREN," said Mr. Hollenden one afternoon, "I want to have a talk with you. Maria, I have decided on something which will please you. Take your hat off and put that dog down. I feel as if I had been caught smoking a cigarette when I see that cur. Shut her up in the little salon, Marie. I don't care if she is a full sister of the one owned by the Comtesse de Brissy ; I can't stand her after I have had the pleasure of Peter the Great's acquaintance. She looks like a skinned rat. Now, then, as a beginning, Shirley and I have ordered the finest carriages to be had in Paris. A victoria for you Maria, a dog-cart for Rose, an automobile for Shirley, two or three traps for any of you, a brougham for myself, and a landau like the English ambassador's. Shirley is attending to the horses with Townshend's help. I am inclined to think he knows even more about horses than Sir Arthur, Shirley.

"Then I have arranged to disembarrass ourselves of all the apartment-houses that Maria's French friends had so thoughtfully saddled on her before I came. We never could have lived in so small a house as that in the rue de Chaillot. I have sublet it at a loss of ten thousand francs a year to Sharp, the American ambassador."

"Oh, father!" cried Rose, in dismay. "A house not fine enough for us let to the ambassador of the United States! How dreadful! How humiliating for America!"

"Well, it is America's fault," said Shirley. "We only

pay our ambassadors seventeen thousand five hundred dollars a year. We furnish him with no embassy, and there is no nation on earth which, when travelling, comes and plants itself upon its ambassador and expects to be entertained by him as the American does. Look at Lord Lucknow, the English ambassador! Look at his salary! Look at his expense fund for entertaining! It is only proper that national entertaining should be done at the nation's expense."

"Mrs. Sharp told me that it would be months before they could get into their house, as they have to select and buy all the furnishings of it. Think what a trouble! And in the mean time they are lodged in four rooms at this hôtel—representing seventy millions of people!" cried Rose.

"Now don't get so excited," said Mr. Hollenden. "Remember that America is a democracy and we have no use for display. Seventeen thousand five hundred is plenty of money, and if Sharp is smart he can do a great deal with it. How we would look sporting an embassy like Lord Lucknow's!"

"We would look just as well supporting as fine an embassy as England's as England does. We ought to maintain our dignity with the best of them. Isn't America the best country in the world?" cried Rose.

"I wonder what our tax-payers in Kansas and Illinois and Colorado would say to that!" said Mr. Hollenden.

"It isn't a question of what those people would say! It is the dignity of America that I am thinking of," said Rose, with her eyes flashing.

"Well, I wouldn't worry over such a silly thing as that," said Maria. "Just as if America cared how it was represented! If you complain about the ambassador to France, I don't know what you would say about the ambassador to Germany, Mr. Gray. *He* is living in an apartment with three other families under him."

"Oh," cried Rose, getting up and walking about, "I don't see how I can bear it! Papa, do you suppose the people at home know of these things?"

"Yes, they know, but they don't care."

"Oh, those lovely Grays! So cultivated, so charming, so capable of managing a château or a palace! *They* know how they ought to be lodged! How they must feel, being obliged to live in a flat!"

"Oh, an apartment in Berlin or Paris is not quite as bad as a flat in Chicago, Rose," said Shirley.

"No, not quite," cried Rose. "Nevertheless, an 'apartment' is only an Europeanized flat. You have to live on one floor and have families over and under you. I can't see very much dignity in that even for a private citizen who could have a house. And as for an ambassador—not a minister, mind you! we have dignified five of our representatives with the title of ambassador so that they need not be ranked by ambassadors from little miserable South American republics, and so that at a state dinner the representatives of seventy millions of people need not sit with the nursery governesses and boys' tutors—for an ambassador giving an official reception, and using an entrance which belongs jointly to four or five other families—nothing private, nothing dignified, nothing as it should be—oh, it is humiliating!"

"At one of the Grays' official receptions the English ambassador and his wife were blockaded at the door by a baby-carriage belonging to the family in the first flat," said Maria, maliciously, just to enrage her sister.

"Our government knows that the salaries paid to its ambassadors are inadequate, therefore it takes pains to appoint only public-spirited men of wealth, who will only be too glad to supply all public deficits out of their private purses!" said Mr. Hollenden, with a sneer.

"Townshend says the last ambassador to Russia lived for a year at the Hôtel d'Europe in St. Petersburg and

never entertained at all, because he was a poor man," said Shirley.

"Well, it's *your* government, children, that you are all so rabid about. As for me, I have always attended to my own affairs and made money. Now you will have an opportunity to see how this precious America of yours is regarded by foreigners."

"Don't say that it is *my* country, father," said Maria. "I never claimed America. I happened to be born there, but France is my country, both by adoption and preference. I hate America and Americans."

"Well, if you think that, at least never let me hear you say so again in my presence, Maria," said Shirley.

Maria looked up to make a defiant reply, but changed her mind when she saw her brother's face.

"We are off the subject," put in Mr. Hollenden, pacifically. "I have practically rented that hôtel, as they call it, to Sharp, and I am going to take you all to-day to look at another one that Townshend thinks he can get for us. The Baronne Valencia is negotiating for it, and thinks, if I am willing to pay an enormous bonus, that she can persuade the people to move out and let us have it just as it is. She says the tapestries are priceless. They have only recently been purchased from some ancient château down near her own—I forget the name—and that they are from the oldest and finest collection in France. If I find that all this is true (and I want Maria to see the house and tell me), I will pay any price to get it. Maria is the only one of us who knows about antiquities."

"I am afraid that it is not true about the tapestries," she said. "The collection at Vrianault is said to be the finest in France."

"Most of these things came from Vrianault—that's the name," said Mr. Hollenden, removing his glasses.

"Impossible!" cried Maria, with starting eyes.

"That's what the baronne said," repeated Mr Hollenden.

Maria at once resolved never to speak to the marquise or the comtesse upon the subject until she controlled sufficient money to repurchase them. Her heart beat fast with pleasure at the idea that it would be her privilege to do so much for the mother of Raoul. She knew that the heart of the marquise was absolutely bound up in Vrianault, and that to part with any of its magnificence must nearly have killed her. How the American admired the fortitude with which the Frenchwomen had borne the blow, and the pride with which they had concealed their losses!

"As to Maria's *entresol*, that is a small matter in comparison. I can sublet that later, or it wouldn't absolutely impoverish me to leave it vacant. But I want a fine place to entertain all your fine friends, Maria, and I want you to take Rose in hand and teach her about art. She must learn from you all the things you have absorbed from many years of European travel. Shirley, how would you like to study art, and have a studio over in the Latin quarter? Maria thinks it an excellent idea."

"I want to enter the army, father. You know that I have no taste for painting. I couldn't draw a straight line."

"One doesn't draw straight lines in art," observed Maria. "It seems a wise course to pursue, I think. I have studied in Julian's studio for ten years, and he thinks I have talent. There is no reason why you shouldn't have. The American army is so vulgar. It is not like European armies, which have size and standing and command respect because the aristocracy are among their officers. I am mortified every time any one asks the size of our army, and if I speak of our navy, people laugh."

" We have never had a chance to show what we could do with our navy," said Shirley, firmly. " Just let a war come on, and see what we could do."

" Pooh !" said Maria. " American brag and blow ! I have heard too much of it to believe a word you say. *I* want you to study art. That is a career in which you would make a name for yourself. You might be a great painter. You ought to see the Comtesse de Brissy's work !"

" Paint !" cried Shirley. " I couldn't paint signs ! I couldn't whitewash a fence ! Father, I wish you would not listen to Maria's silly ideas of making me into a long-haired decadent, like some of her friends ! I want to enter the army !"

" I don't care to have you in the army, Shirley," said his father. " That would take you back to America, and, in all probability, we shall never live there again."

" What !" cried Rose. " *What !* Never live there again ?"

The man entered with some cards.

" Madame the Marquise d'Auteuil, Madame the Comtesse de Brissy, and Monsieur the Marquis d'Auteuil," he announced.

Peter the Great rose and shook himself.

Maria clutched at her parasol until the handle snapped. It was the first time they ever had called upon her formally.

" Not one word about the furnishings of Vrianault," she whispered.

Peter yawned and went forward to meet them.

The comtesse, who spoke English more fluently than her mother, at once set herself to captivate Mr. Hollenden. Raoul seated himself near Rose and Maria, and Shirley devoted himself to the marquise.

Peter looked all three of the visitors over with solemnity, wagging his tail in polite appreciation of the honor

of their visit, then walked over to the marquise and held out his paw most awkwardly.

The Frenchwoman was enraptured. Color came into her pale cheeks, and she put both arms about the dog's neck, calling him any number of fond French names, none of which Peter understood.

"Speak to him in English, marquise," said Shirley. "He is not a French dog."

"But my English is so imperfect," she answered him. "I am afraid even your dog would laugh at my poor efforts."

"Not at all," eagerly affirmed Maria. "Peter is a most intelligent dog."

"Oh my beautiful cabbage! My adorable mustard! My pretty cauliflower!" began the marquise, translating her dog language literally.

Shirley coughed. Peter politely accepted the interpretation and refrained from resenting her selection of epithets. He laid one heavy paw awkwardly on her lap and the other on her shoulder, looking around solemnly at Rose, as if to say, "How is that for entertaining the French!"

"Be careful, Peter," said Rose. "Your paws are very heavy."

Peter took them down and laid his head in the lap of the marquise with a gusty sigh.

"Oh, what intelligence! What nobility!" she cried, caressing him with enthusiasm. "I never saw such a fine dog. He is human! He has a soul!"

"I believe he has," said Shirley. "I wish all the men I know had as excellent a chance of heaven, according to the lives they have lived, as Peter."

"He ought to be called 'Peter the Great,'" said the marquise, laughing.

"Why, that is his name!" said her son. "Clever little maman, to have divined it!"

The marquise colored with pleasure.

"Is it, indeed? A most appropriate name, M. le Tzar. You may number me among your most loyal subjects from this time henceforth."

Maria envied Peter from the bottom of her heart. In all the several years of her acquaintance with the marquise she never had seen the old Frenchwoman betray such enthusiasm. She seemed to have forgotten that she was speaking to Americans, for love of animals and compassion for their sufferings are strong characteristics of the French, notwithstanding that France is the home of vivisection.

"I never have seen so magnificent a creature," she said, still caressing Peter, much to his satisfaction. "I suppose he cost heaps and heaps of money?"

Rose crimsoned.

"I never think of money in connection with Peter any more than I do with a member of my family. His pedigree is long enough to satisfy any one, but his nobility is in his blood, not in the cost of him!"

"Bravo!" said the marquise, nodding her head. "I am glad Peter belongs to you."

"How did you know that he did?" asked Raoul, laughing at the interest his mother was displaying, and knowing that Rose was pleased by it.

"Because she defended him with such admirable spirit," answered the marquise.

"Charming," said Raoul. "My mother is completely fascinated."

He looked into the young girl's eyes and wondered what could have occurred during her short stay in Paris so to change their expression. They no longer met his with such disconcerting frankness, such an embarrassing innocence. He discovered reserve in their depths, a certain wonder and a vague distrust.

That she was holding herself away from him he felt

certain. The contrast between her superb young beauty, so clearly revealed by the searching daylight, and poor Maria's shrunken figure and muddy skin maddened him. The blood mounted to his face, and the veins in his temple swelled purple.

"It is hot in here, mademoiselle; could we not sit near an open window?"

"My sister dislikes draughts, but we can open one in the little salon," said Rose.

She led the way into the next room, where the piano stood, and, seating himself, he sang to her, "Si tu savais!"

Rose leaned her arms on the piano and looked at him. His eyes fixed themselves upon her sombrely. His voice trembled so that she turned her head away. Her white gown was made of lace and showed the clear skin of her arms and neck through its meshes. He stopped abruptly and came around to where she stood. She looked down at him and remembered in a burst of fury that this man at her side had first offered himself to her, then had negotiated through his mother for her sister's hand, had plotted to ruin her brother, and, finally, to pay off his mistress, the woman he really loved, with her father's money.

Her beauty, the strange exhilarating vitality the young girl possessed, the electric sense of nearness to her, the touch of her soft skirts inflamed the Frenchman. He poured out into her ear a torrent of passion which should have addressed itself to one accustomed to its language. To the young American girl, most of it was inexplicable. But she understood enough to know that his words were an insult to her sister, and she felt dimly, uncertainly, that he loved neither of them. Young as she was she knew the language of a man who is merely temporarily swept off his feet and felt sympathy for him, but for this man of another race and another sort she

felt neither compassion nor charity. Every drop of blood in her veins resented his protestations of love. She turned on him like a tigress, poor, unschooled pagan that she was, understanding neither men nor social conditions.

"Marry you!" she cried. "Marry you! I'd rather marry my dog!"

She turned and left him without another word. He stood and looked after her, with his lips drawn up into an ugly smile, and hissing with his breath like an asp. Then he laughed, and Rose had made an enemy for life of the Marquis d'Auteuil.

When she re-entered the room, Maria's furious glances showed her jealousy, but when Raoul followed and seated himself near her, addressing her pointedly, she smoothed her face and listened deferentially to him. It soon became evident from her embarrassed demeanor that he was paying violent court to her, but as Mr. Hollenden was entertaining the comtesse with an amusing history of his early days in Michigan, perhaps that contributed somewhat to Maria's confusion.

"On cold winter nights I used to build up a raging fire, and one by one all the men would drop into the store (mine was the only one in town), to sit around until the stove got red hot and burned the soles of their boots. Whenever I smell scorching leather, I always think of my little store up in Michigan, with a circle of rough men, trousers tucked into their cowhide boots, all chewing my tobacco, all listening to my yarns, and all spitting at my red-hot stove.

"I remember that there was one old fellow who used to like to feel at home in the store. He never wanted to be waited on. He'd rather go and help himself, and let me charge him double, than to have a thing weighed out and tied up. Now the keg of straight-cut tobacco stood at the end of the counter, in rather a dark corner.

He used to come in without speaking to anybody, go to this keg, plunge his hand in, take out a fistful of loose tobacco, stick hand and all into his breeches pocket, and go out again. Then, about every two or three days, I would charge him up with a pound of tobacco, and at the end of the month he always paid for it without a word.

" Well, one day it occurred to the boys that they would play a trick on the old man, so they stood the keg of New Orleans molasses where the tobacco keg stood, and then we all sat down around the stove to wait for the fun.

" Sure enough, about the usual time, in came the old man, hat pulled down over his eyes, never noticing any of us. He went over to the keg, pulled the cover off, dug his hand down into the molasses, never said a word, stuffed molasses and all into his pocket, just as if it had been tobacco, and marched out again."

" Oh ! oh !" cried the comtesse, laughing immoderately. " How very amusing ! How clever of him ! What presence of mind ! But think of his poor clothes !"

Mr. Hollenden chuckled internally and rubbed his hands together. Who said it was so hard to get on with the French ? He felt towards the comtesse much as he did towards the girls he used to know when he was a boy. Rose and Maria and Shirley unconsciously made him feel the difference between them much more than this noblewoman who was a descendant of royalty.

" Tell me more, my dear Mr. Hollenden. I never was so amused," said the comtesse, maliciously. She could see the back of Rose's head and two little scarlet ears, and she knew that Rose could hear her father.

" Were you in the army during the Civil War ?" she said, suddenly realizing that she must treat the tall young American, with her clear eyes and her pure brow, with more respect than she had accorded to Maria. " Raoul tells me that your family is very military."

" No," said Mr. Hollenden, crossing his legs and set-

ting his finger-tips together. "I never handled a sword but once, and that was when the boys made me a Knight Templar. They put a red-and-white sash across me this way, and a belt and sword, and the commander told me to draw my sword. Well, I tried to do it, but I was not used to swords, and I caught the point of it in my nose and slit my nostril a little. You can see the scar yet. That decided me, when the war broke out, to let people fight who knew enough to draw other fellows' blood and not their own. So I stayed at home and made money."

The comtesse was crimson from suppressed laughter. Mr. Hollenden watched her efforts in delight. It always flatters a man to make a woman laugh against her will. But when Rose suddenly stood up and flashed a look of scorn at her, giving her plainly to understand that she comprehended the ridicule of her father, the comtesse recovered herself instantly.

"My dear mademoiselle," she said, "has the new ambassador arrived yet? We never have paid our respects to any ambassador to France except the Spanish, but since knowing your charming sister, and having heard my dear brother's enthusiastic accounts of you and your father and brother, maman and I have decided to call upon them, and to try to learn more about your most interesting country, of which we poor French are so shockingly ignorant."

Maria could hardly believe her own ears. Even Rose was flattered by the proposition, for Mrs. Sharp had already spoken to her about the impossibility of an ambassador from America enjoying the privileges of ambassadors from other countries, aside from their official duties, and especially of the impregnability of the Faubourg St. Germain.

Nevertheless, it was with relief that Rose saw them depart. Neither daughter cared to face her father after

his curiously ill-timed disclosures to the comtesse. Rose was mortified by the tale of the sword, and Maria was furious because of his anecdotes about the lumber camp. But each held her tongue from a different reason. Maria had imbibed the European idea of respect to parents, particularly of respect to her father and to the male members of the family, which forbade her to storm at him as she stormed at her friends. Rose was silent from the feeling that the disgrace he had heaped upon her head and Shirley's was too towering to be mentioned. The girl had countless soldier ancestors, whose very shades must have blushed to hear her father's shameless anecdote. She never before had faced the fact that he had not volunteered in the Civil War. Her grandfather's sword, the blood-stained saddle of her famous uncle, who was killed in the battle of the Wilderness, his spurs, his faded blue coat, with the bullet-hole just over the heart, a scrap of the flag in which he was buried, all these and many more sacred relics of the noble services of the men in her mother's family were the young girl's most valued treasures. And then, with all this heroic blood beating in her veins, to hear her father boast of never having drawn a sword in his country's defence was, to her mind, a disgrace equal to detecting him in a lie.

Shirley looked at her set face as she left the room. He knew that she was wounded in her deepest heart. Maria followed her and carefully closed the door behind her.

"Rose, do make Peter stay out!" she snapped. "I want to talk to you privately, and it really seems to me that he understands too much. It is like talking before a third person."

"Oh no, Maria. Please let Peter come. He knows that I want him. He can't really understand. He is only a dog. Aren't you, Peter?"

Peter laid his head in Rose's lap, and the girl bent over

him in a tenderness which only those who have known the friendship of a dog can understand.

"Rose, I want to tell you something," began Maria. "You must change your free American manner if you wish me to receive you when I am the Marquise d'Auteuil. It was atrocious of you to entice Raoul out to the little salon just now. I saw you! You needn't deny it. And your cheeks were so red and you looked so conscious when you came back. You just did it to torment me and make me think he had been making love to you. You are such a conceited thing because you think you are handsome. Don't you know that Raoul has loved me since the first day he saw me at Vrianault? He told me so. He said no man with a heart in his breast could resist me. He calls me his little brown mouse. Men are so foolish when they are in love. But I won't have you interfering. You are so big and stupid. Why can't you be lithe and airy like me? I have the air of a Parisienne. Raoul says so. But you look like nothing in the world except an American. You are only a big baby. How dared you give that silver-mounted flask to my butler yesterday?"

"Why, I broke it, and was going to throw it away, but he admired it so pointedly that I thought he wanted it."

"How stupid you are! Of course he wanted it. French servants want everything one has. And he knew that he could get it from you. He never would have dared to hint at such a thing with me. Don't you recognize how improper it was to give a flask to a servant? A flask belongs to a gentleman's appointments. It is out of place with a servant. He understood that. He doubtless accepted the equality with you which that present gave him, and in all probability is boasting now that you are in love with him."

Rose started to her feet and Peter growled.

"Oh, Maria! Please don't say such things to me. I can't bear an insult, even if you are my sister."

"I am not your sister!" cried Maria, in a fresh fury at Rose's remonstrance. "Thank Heaven I am only your half-sister. You gave Clemence a ring. Just imagine giving a maid a gold ring! How she must have laughed at your ignorance, your American bad taste, behind your back! Oh, how American you are! How *nouveau riche!* How *parvenu!*"

"Maria!" cried Rose. "How cruel of you! Can't you correct my faults more politely? There is no use in lacerating me like that. I see the force of your argument and I never will make *this* mistake again. But if I make others, as I surely shall, *please* tell me of them more kindly. No one ever spoke to me in all my life as you do constantly."

"I shall speak to you as I please!" cried Maria. "My father has given your education into my hands, and especially as I am to be the Marquise d'Auteuil, you shall listen to me!"

"Oh, Maria, don't marry the marquis! If you only knew about him what I do. He is not worthy of you, and he does not love you. He is only marrying you for your money. I know, because I have heard with my own ears. I am not repeating gossip. Please be warned in time."

Rose stood up and involuntarily laid her hand on Peter's collar as she saw her sister's face. It was so contorted with rage as to be almost inhuman. Tiny flecks of foam gathered on her blue lips. Her little pig eyes snapped green sparks. She curved her thin brown fingers like claws, and crouched as if for a spring. Then she screamed. It was a scream so sudden and so shrill that it brought her father and Shirley to the door in an instant.

"Take her away! Take her out of my sight, or I shall

kill her!" shrieked Maria. "I hate her! She is trying to ruin my happiness. Ah-h! I want to kill her!"

"For God's sake, Rose, what have you done to her?" asked Shirley.

"Nothing. She has done nothing," said her father. "I have seen Maria in such rages with her mother too many times not to know that Rose is not to blame. Stop that screaming instantly, Maria."

Maria straightened up in her chair and obeyed. Her fingers still worked convulsively and the glitter of her long teeth through her drawn lips made her look like an animal.

"Now tell me what the trouble is, Rose."

"Why, father, I was just pleading with her not to marry the Marquis d'Auteuil. I—I think she would not be happy with him."

"Has he asked her, too?" said Shirley. "He proposed to Rose in London."

"It's a lie!" cried Maria, beginning to scream again. But as her father took one step towards her, she cowered down in her chair and became quiet.

"Don't you dare use that word to me!" thundered Shirley.

"Oh, don't mind that, Shirley," said his father. "When you are as old as I am, you won't fight at being called a liar."

"It's all very well, sir, when she didn't call *you* one. But if anybody had—"

"Well, well, people *have*, many a time, and I am here to tell the tale. It didn't hurt me any."

"Oh *no*, father," said Rose, involuntarily.

"Yes, they have, and I never killed them nor ate them raw nor got myself into the papers. I bided my time and avenged myself in my own way. It was slower but safer."

Shirley drew a step nearer to Rose at this admission.

" He never proposed to Rose in London," interrupted Maria, " because the Comtesse de Brissy proposed for my hand before you even sailed from New York. On that voyage he was engaged to me. So you see that she has lied."

" So that was the way of it," said Mr. Hollenden, ignoring Rose's indignant protest. " Well, I think I see a way to settle *that* young man. His is not the only title in Europe, Maria. You must give him up."

" I will not !" cried the woman, staggering to her feet and clutching at her collar as if it choked her. " I will never give him up ! You are too late. I love him !"

Her father looked at her unpityingly.

" You must give him up. You shall yet marry a title, if you like. I'll buy you any sort of a husband you wish except this one. The Marquis d'Auteuil runs the game a little too wide open to suit even me."

" Don't say that, father !" cried Maria, throwing herself upon her knees at her father's feet, much to his disgust. " He loves me ! He loves me !"

" I have said it. I mean it, and I shall stick to it. If you persist after this, I will tell him that not one cent of my money goes with your hand. We shall see then how much he loves you."

With a groan Maria sank into a little heap on the floor, her face twitching painfully. Without another glance at her Mr. Hollenden turned and left the room.

It was easy to see how he had made his money.

CHAPTER XV

THE next day was the one set apart for the inspection of the Hollendens' proposed hôtel, with the Baronne Valencia and Townshend.

Rose was abroad early. She took Peter the Great and her maid and went to the Madeleine flower-market. There is nothing sweeter anywhere in the world than Paris in the early morning at the flower-market. And Rose herself in her linen gown and big rose-colored hat, with her hands full of pink and purple sweet pease, was no small part of this early morning loveliness.

Shirley was the only one up when she returned. He was buried in the pages of the New York *Herald*.

"How sweet and clean you look, Shirley," she said, standing beside him and looking down at him rather shyly. She admired her brother enthusiastically, but was awkward, from timidity, in expressing herself.

"Most men look clean in white flannel," said Shirley.

"Some don't. But if I were permitted but one word to describe you, I think that word would be 'clean.'"

Shirley did not raise his eyes from the paper, but he kicked at her skirts for an answer.

"I have had a letter from Marion Gregory, Shirley," said Rose. "She is coming over for the summer, and wants Lida to travel with her in Germany and Austria."

"Lida will like that. She is such an indefatigable little woman. And the cleverest girl I know! By Jove! Look at the way she earns her living after such luxury as she used to have!"

Shirley got up, dug his hands into his pockets, and began to pace the floor. Rose laughed mischievously.

"Oscar coming with Marion?" he said.

"No."

There was a pause, and then Rose said, nervously:

"Where are you going this evening, Shirley?"

"To take Lida and the baronne to the opera. Do you want to go?"

"No, we are going with the Sharps and Sir Arthur. And where are you going to-day?"

"To look at the house this morning with all of you, and to Tattersall's this afternoon with the Marquis d'Auteuil. But what in the world do you want to know for? You have developed the most awful amount of curiosity concerning my movements in the last week that I ever encountered. Do you want me to wear a pedometer? Are you writing a book on Paris with me for the hero?"

"No, no! It isn't curiosity. I wish I could tell you! Oh, Shirley, I wish I had a mother!"

"Why, what do you want to tell me that you can't? Surely you aren't afraid to tell me anything. Come, what is it? Are you in a mess?"

"It's something I *must* tell you," said the girl, desperately. "Yet I can't bear to. But I've tried every other way, and I must," she ended, incoherently.

Shirley laid his hands on her shoulders and looked her in the face. He never had seen his clear-eyed sister so confused.

"Let her go!" he said.

"Wait. I'll write it," said Rose, rushing out of the room. Presently she came to the door, tossed a crumpled note to him, and fled.

In her room she heard the butler come to lay the table for the American breakfast that her father *would* have, and which he ate in solitary state. Then a knock on

her door, and something white pushed under it. She picked it up eagerly and read :

" You are the best thing that ever happened."

It smelled of Shirley's cigarette, and the banging of the outer door announced his departure.

" M. Shirley left word that you would find him at the Baronne Valencia's when you called for her, mademoiselle," announced Marie when Rose came out.

" What a dear he is !" she said to herself. A hurdy-gurdy under the window was playing the Intermezzo from " Cavalleria Rusticana." Rose leaned out and dropped a franc on the pavement. The man looked so astonished at the noble sound the coin made to an ear accustomed to the sound of sous, that Rose laughed and dropped another. " It's worth it," she said, aloud. " I feel that I ought to celebrate my first victory over Paris ! Oh, you beautiful, clean, wicked city ! You wanted to eat up my brother !" She shook her fist in the direction of the fountains in the Place de la Concorde.

" Who are you shaking your fist at, Rose ?" said her father, back of her.

The girl started.

" At Paris ! All Paris !"

" Don't you like it ?"

" I love it, and yet—the people—"

" Oh, you will get used to them. Cultivate Maria's friends."

" Maria's friends do not seem very anxious to cultivate *us !*" laughed Rose. " I haven't been exactly *overwhelmed* with visitors as yet."

" They will come when we are in our own hôtel. By-the-way, I expect to try the new landau to-day. Your dog-cart will be here, too. Ah, here they are ! Come, let's go down."

" Oh, father, what a beauty that landau is ! I think a landau, as a rule, is *such* an ugly carriage. But this

one is swung so high, it is more like a chariot. The steps should let down."

"And I suppose you would like a powdered footman and coachman, like Lord Lucknow's," said her father, dryly.

"I would!" declared Rose.

"A nice sort of republican *you* are! Has England bitten you already?"

"I don't know that I ever did go in very much for Jeffersonian simplicity. I always have loved uniforms and robes and powdered wigs and knee-breeches and silk stockings. The very ugliest costume that the mind of man could invent is a man's dress of to-day. It is so exquisitely hideous that it is almost tragic."

"A pretty figure I should cut in high-heeled satin slippers and a sword," said her father.

Rose colored and turned away.

"There are others whom a sword would become better," she said.

"I don't like the looks of your chestnut," said her father, quite unconscious of her sarcasm. "He has a wicked look in his eye."

"Ah, but he *is* so handsome!" cried Rose, kindling with enthusiasm. "See his nose and the set of his ears. Look at those slim legs and the lines of his back and flanks. He is a perfect beauty."

"I don't like him. He is too nervous. Are you sure you can manage him, and do you trust Alphonse?"

"I trust myself. Alphonse is only a figure-head."

"Well, if anything happens, will you turn the reins over to Alphonse, and trust yourself to him?"

"I will not. I will drive myself, and Alphonse can only go as a groom."

"They tell me that Alphonse is experienced with horses and thoroughly trustworthy, so I dare say you can manage; but be careful of the bad driving of other

people. Up you go. You look very well, and he is a beauty. Tell Alphonse to look out for you. Keep ahead, where I can watch you. Now, then, you're off!"

The chestnut pranced a little at starting, and seemed nervous at the leaps of Peter the Great.

"Peter, behave yourself! Follow us, or I'll leave you at home!"

Peter obeyed. Alphonse shook his head.

"The Americans train their animals better than we French," he said.

Rose smiled, quite unconscious of the stares of the Frenchmen, who had never seen anything like this handsome young American girl, with her perfectly appointed dog-cart and her beautiful horse. Her big dog trotting behind completed a picture which seemed to give pedestrians in the rue de Rivoli infinite satisfaction.

Mr. Hollenden gathered his party together, consisting of Maria, Shirley, and the Baronne Valencia, and the magnificent hôtel was criticâlly examined. Maria, in spite of a certain horror at the discovery, could not repress a thrill of pride that the furnishings of Vrianault were about to pass into the hands of the Americans, for it was easy to see that Mr. Hollenden considered this almost regal splendor a good investment.

As for Rose, she was not so enthusiastic. She had been somewhat chilled by her reception in Paris, and she could not help wondering if this empty grandeur would not mock her lack of friends. Her sister's unconscious admissions of what this marriage would bring to her in the way of recognition from the fashionable faubourgs, had already given Rose a shrewd idea of the anomalous and painful position Maria now occupied. No girl who has not been neglected at a dance can realize the awful inward sensations of a wallflower. No woman who has not fought her way into society can sympathize with the terror with which another aspirant

views her own preparations for the feast which she knows may never be spread, or the guest chambers which may never be occupied. Rose had been a Western girl at an Eastern school. Therefore she was strangely silent as she heard her father's confident plans. He fixed his eyes upon Maria, and seeing that she was more than satisfied, he acquiesced to the enormous bonus asked—nearly double the sum first mentioned by the baronne, owing to the discovery of the owners that their new tenants were the rich Americans whom all Paris was expecting.

"I am sorry that they have been so dishonorable," said the baronne. "They actually agreed with me—verbally, of course—upon the amount I first mentioned, but when they found out that you were the rich, the great M. Hollenden! Pouf! The price doubled!"

Mr. Hollenden was flattered, in spite of the annoyance he felt at being had upon the hip, as it were, but he chose not to betray it.

"It reminds me of the man who asked for his bill at a Florida hotel. He looked at it, handed it back, and said, 'Guess again. I've got more than that!'"

"But shall you take it? Think well before you commit yourself, for while the French will not hesitate to impose upon you, they will take precious good care that they leave you no opportunity to impose upon them!"

"Yes, Maria recognizes these things as authentic. She likes it, and I shall take it. But perhaps you'd better close the bargain before they raise the price again!"

"Maria knows everybody, I suppose, as she is such a friend of the Comtesse de Brissy."

"Well, from her letters I should suppose that she knew nearly everybody. I am at least familiar with their names and private history, but we have met none of them as yet."

"I dare say she knows as many as I do. I hope she is taking Rose to the Duchesse de Briancourt's on Sunday.

It is the first time she has received since her horrible accident in the fire of the Bazar de la Charité."

"Maria, are you going to the Duchesse de Briancourt's on Sunday?" asked Mr. Hollenden.

"I do not know the duchesse," answered Maria, crimsoning.

"Not *know* her! Why, your letters have been filled with the doings of the Briancourt family!"

"They are great friends of the Comtesse de Brissy," said Maria, huskily. "I have seen them many times at her house, but I was never introduced. You know it is not so much the custom to introduce in Europe as it is in America."

"Quite true," said the baronne, hastening to her rescue. "Very well, then, I shall ask permission to take you all on Sunday. It will be the very best house in all Paris to be seen first."

"Don't include me," said Mr. Hollenden. "There are two members of our family who do not speak French —Peter the Great and myself. I will stay at home with the dog, if you don't mind."

"Very well," laughed the baronne. "Then I will take Shirley and the girls. Sterling will surely show there during the afternoon. He ought to be here now. He and the young Duc de Briancourt are great friends."

"It is twelve o'clock," announced Rose, interrupting them, "and at one Mr. Townshend has promised me a surprise."

"Come, then," said the baronne. "I confess to a weakness for Sterling's secrets and surprises, especially as I know what this one is. Rose, I am coming with you in the dog-cart. I want to watch the action of the chestnut."

Townshend, on his beautiful sorrel mare, Minnehaha, accompanied by his groom, was waiting for them at the door.

"I didn't come in," he said, bowing to them all, but

fixing his eyes upon Rose, whose beauty struck him afresh each time he saw her, " because I heard that you were just coming out. You haven't forgotten, Miss Rose, have you, that the baronne has arranged a surprise for the Bohemian side of you at one o'clock?"

" The baronne does not know that I have a Bohemian side to my nature. It was you who planned it, whatever it is."

Townshend laughed.

" Perhaps. But I suggested it for to-day, because house-hunting is very exhausting, and under ordinary circumstances you would not care for so heavy a meal. But as you breakfasted at seven this morning, you ought to be able to eat a prodigious luncheon."

" How did you know that I had my coffee so early ?" asked the girl.

" I saw you at the flower-market," answered Townshend, coloring under the baronne's astonished gaze.

Rose hesitated to ask why he had not spoken to her, so she only said :

" I never was so desperately hungry in all my life."

" Come, then," said Townshend, riding ahead.

After a short drive they found themselves following Townshend along the Quai de la Tournelle, before a certain number of which he dismounted and tossed the reins to his groom.

The door stood open, and over it appeared the words : " *Tour d'Argent. Maison Frédéric.*"

Within were simple wooden tables, plain chairs, and a spotless floor. Rose's eyes danced as Mr. Townshend pushed two tables together, assisted by half a dozen chattering waiters, and seated his little party near a window filled with ferns, overlooking the river.

Then Frédéric entered—a Frédéric or an Ibsen. We are more familiar with Ibsen in America than with this

marvel, this wonder of a French chef, more's the pity for our digestion's sake.

Frédéric did not scrape and bow after the manner of most proprietors of small restaurants. Not he! He knew what he could do. Therefore he entered with dignity and a certain mild loftiness which went well with his face and the secret knowledge of his attainments. The real Ibsen could not deport himself with more the air of a master of his craft than this conqueror of *cuisine*.

Frédéric folded his arms over his white apron, and watched his waiters place bowls of gray and of red *crevettes* upon the table.

Rose hesitated a moment before she tried them, but Townshend showed her exactly the knack of breaking them in the back and of drawing the tiny, salty, delicious morsels from the shell.

"There is but one trouble with these," said the baronne, "and that is the same trouble that I always have with peanuts in America. I never have had enough, and I never expect to have enough. I have always solemnly believed that I could eat a solid bushel. And of these—well, my arms grow tired of breaking them! That is the only surfeit *I* ever suffer from!"

"Like the whitebait in England," said Shirley. "Rose acquired the whitebait habit in London, and I really thought we should be obliged to make her sign the pledge to keep her temperate on them."

"I could hardly be decent about it," declared Rose. "After eating all of my own, I looked with envy at any stray ones on my neighbor's plates, and a waiter who dared let so much as one cling to the dish to be taken back to the kitchen was a deadly enemy. You may talk about our broiled lobster and terrapin and canvas-back! But give me English whitebait!"

"By the bushel!" said the baronne. "I always wanted to go to a clam-bake, or some sort of an open-air

fish dinner, where I would have the time and capacity to consume all the *crevettes* I want !"

The solemn aspect of Frédéric appealed to Rose. She saw that some culinary sacrament was about to be administered. A side-table was pushed up so close to theirs that it touched. They were sitting with three on each side, which purposely left the end of the table free. Upon this side-table was placed a shining machine consisting of an alcohol broiler and a device for crushing juice from a fowl's carcass. Then an under-done duck was brought in, with the red juices bubbling from its sides.

Frédéric took this bird, thrust a fork into its breast, turned back his cuffs, and bowed.

Townshend watched the sparkling face of the American girl. He knew that she had seen all that America had to offer in the way of splendid dinners, for Mr. Hollenden's were noted from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He justly prided himself upon his knowledge of *cuisine*, yet Townshend knew that nowhere in America—nowhere on all the earth over which he had travelled—would Rose see such a sight as Frédéric carving a duck in the Tour d'Argent.

With a knife as thin and sharp as a razor he severed the legs and wings, not missing the joints by a hair's breadth. Rose looked mischievously at her father. Even he, expert that he was, had to hunt for the joint occasionally. He was watching Frédéric's wizard-like movements with deep envy. He saw him cut down sharply on each side of the breast-bone, and then carve the breast into thin, even slices, each having exactly the same narrow brown rim of skin. Each slice Frédéric tossed onto the silver platter which formed the broiler. Then thrusting the knife close by the prongs of the fork, he cut the carcass into two parts, pressed it into his shining machine, screwed down the top, and

gazed into space. The eager eyes of the Americans were fastened upon the thin stream of red juice which trickled from the spout into the platter of sliced duck. Frédéric performed this rite of extracting the juice until there was none left. Then he dashed salt and white pepper over the duck with a recklessness which is all but alarming to those who do not know that the knowledge of exact cookery comes from within.

Two eager waiters stood by assisting him with all a Frenchman's deftness. One poured some mysterious sauce into the back of the machine as Frédéric crushed the duck's carcass for the last time, and this sauce ran into the platter in a thick, sluggish stream. Once, a waiter, hurrying by, jogged the great chef's elbow. Frédéric turned and looked at him, but the man did not see. Again, in his hurry, he touched this sacred elbow. Frédéric laid down his knife and fork, folded his arms and looked at him. The other two waiters sprang for the delinquent and hurried him from the room. Frédéric watched the open door through which they had vanished, in silent majesty, for fully a minute before he could bring himself to return to his task. He lighted the trim alcohol lamps—the first with a match, the second with an alcohol-smeared finger, lighted from the blaze of the other, and then the platter was adjusted and the duck began to cook. They watched it turn from dark red to brown, basted constantly by the wizard Frédéric, who was not even flattered by their respectful attention. Another duck was undergoing the same process at Frédéric's hand between bastings, so that the entire party were served with an evenness in rotation and such a nicety and precision that it was as satisfactory as a well-mounted play.

Rose gave a little scream of delight when she tasted it, and gave herself a small hug of supreme satisfaction. Frédéric smiled and rubbed his hands.

" The beautiful young girl understands," he said to Townshend.

" That is what the ship's stoker said of you," he said. " You can pay no higher compliment to any man than to ' understand ' him."

" I eat Frédéric's duck with only inarticulate moans of unutterable happiness," sighed the baronne. " I come so seldom."

" Why don't you come oftener ?" cried Rose. " I shall come at least once a week."

" You will do as I do," said the baronne. " You will only come when you have strangers to show about. Besides, when we have done here, you will feel as if you never could look a duck in the face again, for Frédéric makes you eat the legs and wings with your salad. He doesn't use force, but he puts it before you, and if you are as weak as I, you succumb to temptation and eat it. Frédéric isn't exactly wicked, but he is seductive."

Townshend respectfully begged the honor of a word with Frédéric.

" Are we to have pease with this ?" he said.

Frédéric flung up his hands, pursed his lips together, and shook his head.

" No, no," he said. " The pease were finished yesterday. I shall serve no more pease this season. You are to have lentils. For the next course you are to have the *cuisses* with a *salade* of cress and *chicorée*. After that, if you wish, you may have *fruit à la Tour d'Argent*. But no more."

" Thank you," said Townshend, meekly.

" What is *fruit à la Tour d'Argent ?*" whispered the baronne. " I never like to show my ignorance before such a mind as Frédéric's."

" It is made of plums, cherries, apricots, pears, and white grapes, covered with *eau de vie* and *kirschwasser*, and served with bowls of ice surrounding each dish."

"Dear me," moaned the baronne, "I am too young to die! Hasn't that a heavenly sound, Rose, you healthy young animal?"

"I don t know *kirschwasser*," said Rose. "But it sounds—well, I don't care what it tastes like. I'll eat it for the sound of its name."

Shirley and Maria sat side by side, together with their father. Such a contrast as they made! The baronne wondered why Maria gave herself such airs. Such a hideous little beast as she was, and Shirley such a dear! It couldn't be possible that even the Marquis d'Auteuil would think of actually marrying her. Oh no! No man in his senses could do that! And the marquis was noted for his fastidiousness. She quite approved of her cousin's admiration for Rose. It was so seldom, she reflected, that one's relations ever did the proper thing matrimonially, that it seemed almost too good to be true that Rose should care for him. The baronne feared that Sir Arthur's title might prove too strong an attraction.

As they came out, she watched the young girl to see if she had noticed Townshend's feeling, but the baronne could discover nothing. She only saw that Townshend put Rose into the dog-cart with unusual care, examined the harness critically, gave her groom a sharp look, and that she colored when he spurred his mare and rode at her side.

"How well you ride!" said Rose, turning her flower-like face towards him.

"Praise from Sir Hubert," said Townshend. "As you are the most critical young person I ever have known in matters dealing with horseflesh, I admit to being horribly flattered."

"You ought to be in the army. How fine you would look leading a cavalry charge!"

"Do you think I wouldn't be frightened and turn

back? You remember the man who claimed to have been where the bullets were thickest was really riding on the ammunition-wagon."

"You seem always to think I have a poor opinion of you. *Why* do you think so?"

"Because I never have been able to do things such as please your fancy."

"It is not my fancy. It is the real me."

Rose touched the chestnut with her whip and he kicked viciously. Her first impulse was to beat him into instant submission. Then she changed her mind and spoke to him. He seemed to quiet down, and Rose looked at Townshend.

"Why didn't you tell me not to?" she said. "You thought it would be wrong to whip him."

"Because I trust your good judgment."

"I *like* that," said Rose, frankly. "Most men would have shrieked 'Don't!' at me, or would have grabbed the reins."

"But I like that horse. I am glad you have bought him."

"I agree with you. Father doesn't."

"He has been badly driven, I should say. But if you are patient with him and he does not kill you, you will have a fine horse. You have quite a task before you, however. The main thing is to keep your head and not to get nervous when he bolts."

"I like to think that I have a task of that sort," cried Rose. "I hate easy things. Do you know what I think I shall name him? 'Paris.'"

"Because you intend to conquer him?"

"Partly that, but not in the way you mean. He is beautiful and wicked, and I admire but do not trust him. He fascinates me because he is such a picture and has such spirits. But those same spirits, I fear, do not indicate simply animal life. 'Paris' is malicious—like

French wit. He may learn to like me, yet he would run away with me and drag me to my death if he could. That is Paris."

"I am afraid you do not like your Paris," said Townshend.

"I love it. And yet, I shiver."

The landau crossed the Pont de la Concorde.

Rose attempted to follow, but the chestnut lowered his head and kept on down the Quai d'Orsai. Townshend looked anxious, and the groom uncrossed his arms several times, but Rose pressed her lips together and sat up very straight. No girl in all America had managed as many horses as this child of a cavalry regiment.

As she reached the Pont Alexandre III. a steam-tram gave vent to one of the unearthly screeches which render Paris so horrible to sensitive ears, and then that which Townshend had been waiting for happened. The chestnut reared and plunged and reared again, in imminent danger of falling over backward. Rose cut him savagely with her whip, but with a sudden movement of his head he got the bit in his teeth and one rein under the curved shaft, and bolted down the Quai d'Orsai.

Townshend seemed to settle in his saddle, as with set teeth, he galloped after the flying dog-cart which spun along in front of him. His American mare, recognizing the work before her, stretched her neck and flew after the chestnut. Townshend urged her on, but the chestnut was as fleet as the wind and easily kept ahead.

Suddenly, to Townshend's horror, he saw Rose's groom spring over the back of the seat and drop to the ground. He saw the reason with a beating heart. The street was being repaired and a gendarme was regulating the traffic, which was obliged to pass a monster steam-roller single file.

Rose herself grew a little pale when she saw what was ahead of her. Then she heard Townshend galloping up

behind her. She heard a whip cut the air and a series of shrill screams from Alphonse the groom. Then Townshend gained on her. Out of the corner of her eye she could see Minnehaha's nose, with her nostrils showing red ; then her distended eye, then her delicate ears, then her flying mane, then Townshend himself. In this fashion, on they rushed, the wind singing past their ears, and the gravel flying from beneath their racers' hoofs. Townshend spoke to the mare, and, gathering herself for a supreme effort, she reached out and came abreast of the chestnut.

With a lithe movement, like an Indian in battle. Townshend let himself half-way out of the saddle, holding the mare's mane, and as she came up with the chestnut, he swung down still lower, until only his leg was in the saddle, and with one strong, downward jerk he got the rein from under the shaft and loosened the bit. The chestnut's satin skin twitched all over, and little red flames seemed to come into his wicked eyes as he felt a strong man's hand on the lines.

When Townshend had made him stand, trembling and fretting and longing to bolt again, the man turned and looked into the girl's eyes. She was sitting quite still and smiling faintly. Flecks of foam from the horses spotted her gown, and her dog-skin driving-glove was split across the palm. Otherwise she was quite unruffled.

" Were you frightened ?" he asked, in a low tone. His own face was deadly white. Hers was brilliant and full of spirit.

" No," she said. " I think not. I might have been, only I knew that you were behind me and that you saw."

A gleam came into the man's eyes.

" I was angry," she confessed, " when Alphonse deserted me."

" I didn't have time to stop to kill him," said Town-

shend, savagely, "but I gave him a cut across the face with my whip that he will not forget!"

"I have had English and American grooms," said Rose, "and I have ridden and driven wild, runaway horses. I have been a little too daring, perhaps, and so have got into more accidents than I ought, but I never was deserted in time of danger by any man except a Frenchman!"

CHAPTER XVI

CLEMENCE was on her knees Saturday morning, before one of Miss Hollenden's trunks, packing up the effects from the *entresol* which were to go into the beautiful hôtel in the Boulevard St. Germain. She talked aloud as she folded gowns and stuffed the sleeves of bodices with twisted rolls of tissue-paper. Her work suited her, for a Frenchwoman understands clothes as a mother understands baby-talk. She fondled the delicate *lingerie* which Madame Lucie had declared would never be seen, and packed it with unusual care. A smile of personal triumph illuminated her face as she realized mademoiselle's engagement, and she fairly longed for an opportunity to bait her foe. But how could she manage it without appearing undignified? She went to the bell and rang for the butler.

"Where is mademoiselle, Louis?" she asked.

"She has gone out."

"Gone out? Alone? Without me?" exclaimed Clemence.

"Yes, Madame Clemence. She said to tell you that she had gone out with her sister, but I sent François down to watch her, and he said her sister was not there. He spoke to Madame Lucie, who was just coming in, and she said she met mademoiselle with a long dark cloak on and a thick veil, walking alone."

"Then how could she tell that it was mademoiselle?" demanded Clemence, suspiciously.

"I do not know, Madame Clemence."

The Frenchwoman thought a moment.

"When did she go, Louis?"

"On this instant. François was just telling me when you rang."

"Ah, good! You are very intelligent, Louis, and I want you to do something which requires spirit and discretion. Go down, as if you were going out, fall into conversation with Madame Lucie, tell her that I am alone and packing mademoiselle's underwear, and that it is the most beautiful that you ever saw. You will do this?"

"But yes, Madame Clemence. She is not to know that you sent me?"

"Certainly *not!*"

"But I am to arouse her curiosity and cause her to pay you a visit?"

"Perfectly! What spirit you display!"

"I will go at once. Might I put a bottle of champagne on the ice?"

"If you will be so amiable. How clever of you to think of it! I think I would have one of the *extra sec* that mademoiselle's father sent yesterday."

"Good! And I will place a box of *Suprême Pernots* on the table."

"Thank you a thousand times. And—Louis, I think you might have a bottle of mademoiselle's Burgundy for yourself. We are to move so soon, it will never be missed. You and François are most faithful."

"All my compliments, Madame Clemence! Behold me! I go on the instant."

Clemence had not more than time to tear open another trunk, which she had packed with infinite pains only that morning, before she heard Madame Lucie's ring. She strewed every piece of the beautiful *lingerie* which Maria owned on the bed and chairs, and then answered the door herself.

"Ah, my friend!" she cried, at the sight of the *concierge*. "What a surprise! How well timed is your visit! Mademoiselle is gone out and I am quite alone. Will you not come into the salon and let me offer you a drop of wine?"

"What an amiable heart you have, my dear," said the *concierge*, seating herself in the salon but looking suggestively towards the boudoir. Clemence deliberately closed the door with many apologies and smiled maliciously at her visitor's evident chagrin.

"What wine do you prefer, my friend? Will you not be persuaded to try a glass of the fine old champagne which M. Hollenden sent to mademoiselle yesterday?"

"With much pleasure! But I am afraid I have interrupted you. Were you reading as I came in, or at your devotions?"

"Neither, my dear. I was only packing up odds and ends of mademoiselle's finery. Nothing worth mentioning, for although to poor women like you and me it seems most magnificent, still, it is nothing to the *trousseau* which is being ordered."

"So! she is ordering her *trousseau*, is she? And yet she is not sure of him!"

"How do you know she is not sure of him? I tell you I am in her confidence, and I know. See, is not this a fine wine?"

"Delicious! Superb!" cried the *concierge*, clasping her hands and rolling up her eyes in an ecstasy. "Quite the finest I have ever tasted!"

"Is it as fine as the Burgundy which Madame Flamont on the third floor uses?" asked Clemence, with elaborate innocence.

"Better! Much better!" affirmed Madame Lucie. "Yes, thank you, I will have another glass. Where is it to be had? I think Lili would like some. Whatever she wishes she gets, my Lili!"

"Ah! I am glad to hear that. But I am afraid she cannot get this wine, as M. Hollenden has taken the entire vintage. It is very rare and very fine. Hold your glass out for a drop more! Ah, that goes better!"

"Where has mademoiselle gone with the dark cloak and the thick veil?" asked the *concierge*.

"Ah! that is a secret," laughed Clemence. "I am surprised that you knew her. You are very clever, Madame Lucie! Very clever and very observing. Tell me, how *can* you discover so much? As for me, I am but a stupid fat fool, and I only see what is under my nose."

"Ah! it was quite easy," said the *concierge*, bridling and smoothing her gown over her knees. "You malign yourself. Sometimes I have thought you more than a match for me. I saw mademoiselle's hands! *Mon Dieu!* It was enough. Of course we who serve her admire her good points, as you say; but just between ourselves, over our wine, we may admit that the good God never made such hands on a human being before. They are like a monkey's claws."

"Her hands are not beautiful, truly, but still, I am surprised that you should be so positive that it was mademoiselle just by one glance at her hands. Surely there must be other hands in the world quite like them!"

"Never!" cried the *concierge*. "I would know them anywhere! They are so ugly! I could identify her in the Morgue, even if there were nothing else left to see!"

"Ah! but you are observing," said Clemence, realizing the truth of Lucie's shrewdness.

"Now, then, we have drunk the bottle. Pray go on with your packing. Perhaps I might even help you, if you are willing," said Lucie, rising.

"Oh, you are too amiable! I was just folding a little of this *lingerie*. Of course she will not use this when she is married. She has ordered some much finer."

"Finer!" gasped the *concierge*. "Finer! But it is

impossible to make *lingerie* finer than this! What embroidery!—and all real lace! It is exquisite! It is fit for a princess!"

"This is only a little of it," said Clemence. "That other trunk is quite full of it. But the other will be finer, for it will be for the eyes of her bridegroom. It will not go unseen, as this has done."

The *concierge* smiled.

"We shall see," she said. "One thing I know, and that is that she will not see her bridegroom, as you call him, to-morrow!"

"Pardon! But I am sure she will! She is invited to Madame la Duchesse de Briancourt's to-morrow, and he also will be there. I have heard him tell her so!"

"And *I* say he will not, for he will be at Barbizon! I tell you what I know! He has taken rooms at the Hôtel de la Forêt for to-night and to-morrow night. And he will not go alone!"

Clemence refused to see Madame Lucie's knowing looks, which, if she noticed, she must challenge.

"Ah! perhaps he has changed his mind," she said, carelessly. "It is nothing. She will not care. She sees him very often."

"Never here!" cried the *concierge*. "He never comes to see her here!"

"Ah! it would not be proper, Madame Lucie. You forget that a young girl in good society is not like a *cocotte*. She may not receive a gentleman unchaperoned!"

"There is the bell, Madame Clemence! Pardon! I have never seen your kitchen. Might I just speak to François while Louis answers it? I will take my leave of you here and go down by the back stairs, if you will permit. *Au revoir!* and all my compliments on the wine!"

Clemence was on her knees again before the trunks when Maria entered, with her cloak across her arm.

" How hot it is !" she cried, sinking into a chair. " Fan me, Clemence, and take my boots off."

" You have fatigued yourself, mademoiselle, going about in the hot sun with your sister. And then the weight of this cloak ! Why did you carry it ?"

" I didn't carry it, I wore it !" snapped Maria. " And I wore this veil and went alone. If I am in a conspiracy, I will be a conspirator ! But I have failed miserably, and you must do it for me !"

" Do what, mademoiselle ? You may command me."

" I have been walking up and down in front of the Comtesse de Brissy's, trying to ascertain if I might see the marquis ; but although I know that both the ladies are out, I dared not go and ask for him. It is not yet noon, so he has not even breakfasted. You must go there at once and arrange a *rendezvous* for us. I will wait in the little hair-dresser's shop on the corner. Tell him I must see him at once. It is most important."

" Very good ! We shall set out at once. I have put on the tan shoes, which mademoiselle will find easier. Let me tell Louis that we are leaving, and to serve breakfast on our return."

Maria waited in the little shop, nervously clasping and unclasping her thin hands, which were bare. Her thick veil stifled her, and her emotion caused her heart to beat violently.

" Why do people stare so at my hands ?" she muttered. " Have they never seen a diamond-ring before ?"

She hid them under her cloak and walked to the door. The hair-dresser offered to serve her, but she shook her head irritably. He brought her a fan, but she threw it on the floor, and he shrugged his shoulders and left her to herself.

Presently Maria saw Clemence coming, and she hurried to meet her. The hair-dresser ran to the door and looked after her.

" Ah, ha !" he chuckled, rubbing his hands. " It is mademoiselle the American, whose father is trying to marry her to the Marquis d'Auteuil. The *dot* will be fifty millions of francs, it is said. *Mon Dieu !* It would be more than that if I were the marquis ! See what expensive tastes bring one to ! What a carriage ! Like a grasshopper in a fit ! Run, wife, and see if it is not a *rendezvous !* I saw the noble ladies drive out an hour ago with *couronnes* for the tomb of the comte. Mademoiselle is turning in at their hôtel. Follow them, I beg ! Ah ! she threw my fan on the floor, did she ? Well, I shall have her secret to pay for it."

" Courage, mademoiselle," whispered Clemence, as they were shown in. " M. le Marquis did me the honor to receive me in person, and he seemed overwhelmed by your courtesy in coming. He is quite alone. I will wait in the corridor. Gather yourself together and hold your head up with him. He admires spirit."

The marquis hastened to meet his *fiancée* as she entered the salon, and led her to his *cabinet de travail.*

She flung back her veil, as she had seen Ellen Terry remove hers, but the impression she had intended to make upon Raoul was marred by the perspiration which streamed down her hot face.

" My darling !" cried the marquis, who had nerved himself for the interview. His creditors were becoming so impertinent that he had determined that very day to bring matters to a crisis at once. Maria's visit was most opportune.

Emboldened by his ardor, Maria threw herself into his arms and embraced him damply.

" What brings you here, my beautiful one ? Have things gone wrong with you ? Have you come to break our engagement ? Do you no longer love me ?"

Maria half-way withdrew herself and blinked her incredulous eyes at him, like a weak-eyed terrier.

"No!" she gasped. "Quite the contrary! I have come to tell you that the time has arrived to speak to my father. Rose is doing all she can to prejudice him against you and to separate us. I am afraid he will listen to her, if you do not act at once."

"Ah! your sister is jealous, that is all, my little brown mouse! What small hands you have! See, they will need such a tiny wedding-ring! So your sister is talking against me! What did she say?"

"She told my father and Shirley that you cared only for my money and that you had offered yourself to her!"

"Offered myself to her! Did *she* tell that?"

"Well, no. It was Shirley who let it out," admitted Maria.

"What an odd mistake! I asked your brother for his sister's hand. I meant *you*, my darling! I never thought of Rose. How droll that she should have taken it to herself! She must be very conceited."

"She is!" cried Maria, violently. "She thinks every one who looks at her is in love with her!"

"How very amusing!"

"But—you—did you never make love to her—on the ship, or in London?" demanded Maria, suspiciously.

"Oh-h!" said Raoul, with a shrug, "I paid her compliments, of course! Who wouldn't? But as to love! I can assure you, from my heart, that if she makes me trouble, or comes between my beautiful bride and me, I shall hate her! So! I am only marrying you for your money, am I? See! I love you! I love you! Give me your lips! Kiss me! Kiss me!"

"Ah-h!" gasped Maria.

He drew her to a *chaise longue*.

Maria came out proudly. Clemence peered sharply into her triumphant face, as she adjusted the thick veil.

"Has mademoiselle succeeded in her design?" she asked, respectfully.

"He will ask for my hand at once—to-day!" said Maria, laughing hysterically.

"Then control yourself, I pray!" whispered Clemence. "Hush! Step into this doorway and look at these photographs. Madame la Comtesse is just returning."

When he had shown her to the door, without summoning the butler, the Frenchman poured out a small glass of *fin champagne* and gulped it down. He continued to make wry faces long after the taste of the fiery liquid had passed away.

He was intensely uncomfortable. Two of his largest notes fell due that day, and his creditors impudently refused to believe the story of his engagement. He was expected by his family to call upon the Duchesse de Briancourt the next day, and Lili had quarrelled with him so violently on account of the reports of his marriage which her mother brought to her that he had only partially pacified her by promising to take her to Barbizon for Sunday. What was to be done? Lili was not only the most beautiful creature in Paris, but she held his notes and threatened to disgrace him. He had introduced Shirley to her, but to the Frenchman's amazement and Lili's fury, Shirley had never availed himself of the opportunity to go a second time. In addition to all this, Maria had thoroughly alarmed him with her news. He knew that Rose could ruin his chances with her father, possibly even with Maria herself, if she were to repeat the episode of the proposal in the little salon. He ground his teeth again as he remembered her words of contempt.

"She hates me," he said to himself, "yet I must dissemble and conquer in spite of her. What a beautiful young animal she is! Yet how gladly I could see her humiliated—ruined forever, if need be!"

He rose when his mother and sister came in and embraced them tenderly.

" Behold me !" he said. " The lamb is about to be sacrificed ! I go at once to propose for the hand of my bride !"

" To-day, Raoul !" said his mother. She took a step forward and laid her hand on his arm. Her proud old face became colder and harder. "Alas ! that it should be necessary, my son !" she said. Her voice trembled with emotion. " Were it not for Vrianault, where my children were born ; the place where your father took me as a bride ; the château of our family for so many, many generations, I would not permit you to sacrifice yourself. Believe me, my boy, I do not grudge your debts. They are only those of a gentleman of our blood—of a French nobleman. I would willingly allow you all you have had of us, if that were all. But you know that to part with Vrianault—or even one of its tapestries, would nearly break my heart. That involves our family honor. Vrianault is a trust, and as such is sacred. By this marriage you sacrifice yourself for the honor of your mother and of your family quite as sincerely as if you turned monk in the cause of our Holy Church."

The old Frenchwoman bowed her head and her son kissed her with cold lips. He attempted to reply, but stammered, and then, without another word, he hastily left the room and made his way to the Hôtel Continental, where Maria had assured him he would find her father at this hour.

Mr. Hollenden was writing at a little inlaid desk, so small and lady-like that he occasionally swore when his papers fell on the floor.

When the Frenchman's card was handed to him, he held it away at arm's-length and read the name.

" Show him in," he said.

The marquis entered with his usual manner of exquisite breeding, and even the flower in his buttonhole

was not lost upon the American, who looked him over from head to foot as he approached.

Under his children's tutelage, the Westerner was learning the make-up of a gentleman. He observed closely, and saw with secret chagrin his own lack in social observances. He watched Shirley, and in private practised his manner. Before the mirror, in his own room, with the door carefully locked, he worked himself into a steam, putting on and off his Inverness coat, as he had seen Townshend manage his. He adopted a *boutonnière* in cold daylight with a tremor of shame, but he still stuck at cigarettes, and clung to cigars with dogged persistence. Not even for the touch of elegance which he felt that they would give, could he lose what he considered the last vestige of American manhood. He was fast becoming the most explosive element, if he only knew it, in the crucible he fondly imagined he was mixing with so cool a head and so steady a hand. The atmosphere of Paris was altering him within and without. And thus his respect for Maria's knowledge of European customs, where even Shirley and Rose were often at fault, increased daily. A sneer on her little thin face would cause him to color, and her sarcasm often made him tingle with shame to the tips of his fingers as he remembered how little he knew and the mistakes he continued to make in spite of his efforts.

He no longer remained seated when a visitor entered. He received the marquis with cold courtesy, but his American manner returned as the facts of the Frenchman's intercourse with his family recurred to his mind. He might have been in his Wall Street office, receiving stock quotations, as he looked the marquis in the eye with a keenness which quite upset the Frenchman's nerve. Mr. Hollenden before now had measured an antagonist over a poker-table in Nevada when there was

a suspicion of crookedness, and the other man had quailed before the determination of his cold blue eyes, with their white lashes, as the Frenchman was quailing now. The insolence which the marquis had been gathering up since he left his mother began to desert him, and he realized before a word had been spoken that Rose's warning had taken effect.

" Well, what can I do for you ?" said Mr. Hollenden.

If d'Auteuil could have thrown up the game then and there he would have done it, for his sensitive pride felt at once that at the hands of this American he was to meet his Waterloo. For one instant he hesitated palpably. Then a cold sweat broke out over him from head to foot as he realized what lay behind him and what before him if he failed. His nerve returned. He gripped the brim of his hat so tightly that he strained the fastenings of his glove.

" You can do much, if you will but listen to me, dear M. Hollenden, and more if you will grant my request. I am come to ask for the hand of your daughter. I wish to make her the Marquise d'Auteuil."

Mr. Hollenden looked at the carpet and stroked his mustache. The marquis took courage.

" You wish to marry my daughter?" said the American.

" I do, indeed," said Raoul, fervently.

" Ah ! Which one ?"

The American's sudden, darting glance disconcerted the Frenchman quite as considerably as the question.

" Maria—the elder one."

" Maria ? You are quite sure that it is Maria ?"

" Quite !" said Raoul, coldly.

He resented Mr. Hollenden's chaffing tone.

" That is a very proud old title you have to bestow. I feel that I ought to tell you that Maria is a child by my first wife, and that, even judged by American standards, her mother was not a lady. Rose's mother was."

" I quite understand," said the marquis, cheerfully. " That need not come between us in the least."

" Consider, marquis. Maria's mother was, in fact, my cook !"

The Frenchman started. This, then, was the secret of poor Maria's vulgarity. It was a bitter moment for d'Auteuil, but memory and fear rushed to his rescue, and he answered, steadily :

" It is very honorable of you to be so frank, my dear M. Hollenden. But I have quite made up my mind to marry her."

" Oh, you have, have you ? Well, that is handsome of you ! Do you love her ? I feel that I ought to warn you that Maria, while an excellent woman in many ways, would try any man's love. In fact, she would drive a sensitive man crazy. Maria tells me that you are sensitive. *' Fin,'* she calls you in French."

" I thank her for the compliment," said Raoul, painfully. He wondered if the American knew how he was torturing him. " I think I understand her as well as a man may understand any woman, and I still say I wish to marry her."

" You love her ?"

" With all my heart ! I adore her !"

" You mean Maria ? You understand that it is Maria we are discussing ?"

" Certainly I understand !" cried the marquis, losing his temper a trifle. " I love her to distraction ! I long to marry her, in spite of all obstacles ! Nothing shall prevent me. I will have her !"

" Ah ! I like to hear you speak in that way," said Mr. Hollenden, enthusiastically. " I like the tone of sincerity. I believe you really love her !"

The Frenchman drew a long sigh of such absolute relief that he almost sobbed. He wondered how he could have been so doubtful of his success.

"I assure you on my honor that I am perfectly sincere, and that I truly love her. Why else should I wish to marry her?"

"To be sure!" said Mr. Hollenden, cordially. "As I understand it, you assure me on your word of honor that you love her so sincerely that you wish to marry her in spite of her birth, and that nothing can alter your determination to marry her?"

"You have understood me perfectly. I only await your consent."

"You have that with all my heart!" said Mr. Hollenden, holding out his hand frankly.

The Frenchman grasped it with eagerness and held it firmly.

"You understand," said Mr. Hollenden, still clasping the Frenchman's hand, "that Maria will have no *dot*. I, as an American, could not harbor the idea of selling my daughter. I shall give her something handsome as a wedding present—a house, perhaps, or a complete set of diamonds, with a tiara—it would become her. But her money will only come at my death. She will have enough *then*, I assure you."

Mr. Hollenden still wrung the Frenchman's hand and laid his left on Raoul's padded shoulder, which limply fell away from the American's now odious cordiality with a disgust which brought a gleam of malicious delight into the older man's eyes.

"You know," pursued Mr. Hollenden, still holding Raoul's reluctant hand and shaking it, "that I have heard so much about a Frenchman's love of money, that it is a great pleasure to me to prove the contrary by so illustrious a marriage in my own family to a wife without a penny. I am sure it is—it must be the first instance of a French nobleman marrying absolutely for love! It is handsome of you!"

The face of the Frenchman became purple with rage,

but he controlled himself with a violent effort to make one more appeal.

"But, my dear M. Hollenden! A Frenchman always expects a *dot!* One never marries without a settlement! Never! Never!"

"Ah, but Maria will not have a sou! And I have your word of honor that you love her so sincerely that no obstacle could prevent your marrying her! As I said before, it is handsome of you, for Maria is not a beauty—not as pretty as Rose, for instance. To be sure she will have no ready money—"

With a cry of rage the Frenchman broke away from Mr. Hollenden, his mouth twitching, his eyes flaming.

"*Sapristi!* You mock me! *Votre fille! Pah! Rastaquouére! Je m'en vais! Bon jour!*"

The marquis always forgot his English when he was angry. He bowed stiffly and turned away.

"Are you not going to marry her?" cried Mr. Hollenden.

"*Mais, non!*"

"Ah, consider!" he said. "She will have no money, but I shall give her a house—"

"*Mais, non!*"

"Or a tiara!" called Mr. Hollenden.

"*Mon Dieu! Non! Non! Non!*" shrieked the Frenchman, flinging both hands above his head and shaking them wildly.

He turned at the door to speak, biting his purple lips and trembling with mortification and anger, but finally made but another stiff bow and left the room abruptly.

Mr. Hollenden listened to the closing of the outer door, and then sank into a chair, speechless with silent, internal laughter.

CHAPTER XVII

THE rage of the Frenchman as he drove away from the Hôtel Continental was frightful. He gnawed his lip until it bled. The full consequence of his failure upon his own life had not yet been borne in upon him. His sensitive vanity was so wounded that his mind dwelt only upon the insolence of the American and his own pitiful position. It never occurred to him to admit even to himself that he was rightly served for either his duplicity or his cold-blooded, mercenary motives. According to his code of honor, he had acted as any man should. He had tried to secure a beautiful wife with those desirable millions, and, failing in that, he had contented himself with the other. Any man in his place, he believed, would have been a fool to act differently. His failure, his mortifying, complete chagrin, he laid at Rose's door, and with the unutterable malice of the Gallic nature, so inexplicable to the Anglo-Saxon mind, he fell to plotting for his revenge upon her. He did not even pause to contemplate his own ruined prospects in his rage for vengeance.

A nature more brutal, a man of lower birth, would have longed to murder his enemy, if roused to the pitch of fury under which Raoul was suffering. But to the sensitive Frenchman, with his exquisite nerves and his subtle intelligence, so large a crime as murder was as completely out of his reckoning as self-crucifixion would be. He knew greatness neither in vice nor virtue. He read Kipling's "Tomlinson," not with a shrug of disgust,

but with the distaste of utter uncomprehensiveness. He feared pain of any sort with an intensity which was almost a mania. If disgrace or poverty threatened him, he viewed suicide as the only honorable way out. To live and suffer nobly—it would be the act of a fool, or of a man who had not the instincts of a gentleman. What the Gaul calls pride the Anglo-Saxon calls vanity. Such was d'Auteuil's code of honor. Such his courage.

He drove to the Jockey Club for his mail, and found several letters and a telegram.

He rang the bell and sent a man to search for his friend the Duc de Trèves. The man came back presently to say that the duc could not be found.

The telegram was from Lili, saying that she had been taken violently ill and could not see him until Monday. It was sent by her maid at the same moment that that innocent young creature, Lili, was boarding the train at the Gare St. Lazare for St. Germain with the Duc de Trèves.

His man came presently to say that he had succeeded, after all, in trimming the marquis's dog-cart entirely in pink roses, according to his orders, for the *Fête des Fleurs* that afternoon, but that it had been the most difficult of tasks, and had required the utmost skill to secure them.

Raoul's first impulse was to cancel the order and not to attend the fête. Then he hesitated. His dog-cart was sure to be the handsomest one there. It always was. Last year he had used shaded nasturtiums, and Lili had worn a yellow gown. This year she was to have worn pink. She must have been quite ill to deny herself both the fête and Barbizon. She would have looked lovely in pink—pink suggested Rose Hollenden. How he would enjoy driving *her* in that rose-trimmed dog-cart down the length of the Bois, and compromising her forever in the eyes of all Paris! His eyes sparkled

at the thought. She was an American, and she would not realize what she was doing, and if Maria were not with her when she started, there would be no one to warn her. The more he dwelt upon the idea, the more devilish his determination became to avenge himself upon her in this way. It would be perfectly safe for him, for the Hollendens would never discover what had taken place, while in the eyes of his whole world Rose's good name would be soiled irretrievably. After one drive in the Bois in company with a Frenchman, and unchaperoned, a woman's name would always be shrugged at by some in any gathering of the *haut monde.* They would not cut her—she was too rich for that—but they would raise the eyebrows, and Raoul would always see it and revel in his revenge.

While he was ruminating, Shirley entered the club. D'Auteuil called him to his table and they sat down together.

" I beg of you not to observe my preoccupation," said the marquis, with a tremor in his voice, " but I am grieving over the fact that I can go no more to your house. I have committed the unpardonable sin of admiring both of your sisters too ardently, and my hand has been rejected twice. Therefore, I am sad."

Shirley blushed crimson. He had just heard the story from his father, and objected strongly to the mode of dismissal which Mr. Hollenden had employed, for he knew the frightful mortification which had been inflicted upon the thin-skinned Frenchman. If he had dreamed that d'Auteuil was going to mention it, wild horses would not have drawn Shirley to the club that day.

" Oh, I say !" said Shirley, awkwardly. " You needn't feel that way, you know. If you care to come, we would all be glad to see you."

"Alas ! your beautiful sister Rose would not," said d'Auteuil.

" Rose ? Why, she is the most forgiving, generous creature in the world. She would make everything as smooth as possible for you."

" I feel so sad at giving up your friendship. It has been charming for me to know you. If I thought she would condone my fault—"

" Look here, d'Auteuil," said Shirley, leaning forward and tapping Raoul's coat-sleeve with his cigarette-holder, " if you want Rose to be good to you, let her see that you suffer. Her whole heart rushes out to people who are in trouble. She would do you no end of good, if you would go to see her. Take my word for it, and come whenever you like. We shall sleep in the new house to-night."

" Ah ! you must be moving in to-day, then ?"

" We are. Rose is the last to leave the hotel. The others have gone. I left her packing her trunks with her maid."

" She is alone, is she ?" said the Frenchman. " Her sister is not with her ?"

" No ; everybody has gone except Rose."

D'Auteuil rose excitedly and looked at his watch. Glad of an excuse, Shirley left him and joined another party.

Raoul gave some hurried orders to his man, exchanged his white flower for a pink one, and, jumping into a cab, he drove to the Hôtel Continental. He sent up his card with a few words of petition on it, and Rose received him.

He stood before her the picture of contrition.

" I am come to say good-bye," he said, in a low voice.

Rose flushed, as her brother had done. It seemed astonishing to her American mind to speak so freely of an embarrassing subject.

" Good-bye ?" she repeated, to gain time. " You are going away ?"

"No, mademoiselle, do not pretend to misunderstand me," said the Frenchman, looking her fully in the face with his sad brown eyes. "You know quite well that I have been dismissed—and how. I will say nothing of M. Hollenden's manner. He is *your* father. But I grieve to think that by my eagerness to ally myself to your family I have forever lost the friendship of the most beautiful woman I ever have seen"—Rose made a gesture of recoil—"and of the only American, if you will allow me to be so rude to your nation, who is a lady, judged by *my* standards. Your brother Shirley, also, is the most delightful boy I ever met. It cannot fail to grieve me that by this one indiscretion I have lost you both."

"You are very kind to like us," said Rose, striving hard to overcome her repugnance to him. "But if you care to continue Shirley's acquaintance, I am sure he would be glad."

"But not yourself? Alas! you cannot forget, and you cannot forgive!"

"I cannot forget, certainly," answered the girl, coloring through her fresh, rosy skin under the Frenchman's eyes and voice, "but I can and do forgive. As I understand the matter, I have less to forgive than my sister."

"Let us leave her out of the question. This affair is quite between ourselves. It is *your* friendship I wish to retain—yours and your brother's. Is it so difficult to condone *one* offence? Is a man utterly condemned in your eyes for *one* mistake? Have I no chance with you to prove that I can make myself worthy of your clean American liking?"

"Oh *yes!* I am not so unjust as all that!"

"Then you will ask yourself to forget?"

"Yes."

"And I may have the chance to atone for my mistake? Consider the difference in our customs. You will make

allowances, will you not? You will forget that you are young in this world's ways, and you will govern yourself like a woman of society?"

"If you like. I do not wish to be thought narrow or prejudiced."

"Ah, mademoiselle! What an angel's heart you have! Your brother assured me that if I came you would do this!"

"Shirley said so?" asked Rose, her eyes brightening with pleasure. She was especially keen for her brother's approval.

"He told me not half an hour ago at the club that you were the most generous creature in the world, with a heart of gold."

"I can't imagine Shirley saying such a thing," said the girl, smiling brilliantly. "But I am glad to know that I have done right in his eyes."

"You have won his approval and my respectful admiration. I thank you a thousand times for your sweet graciousness. *Au revoir,* mademoiselle. I am on my way to the *Fête des Fleurs,* and my dog-cart is waiting just around the corner."

"The *Fête des Fleurs?* Oh, is it to-day? I had quite forgotten. Last week the Baronne Valencia and Mr. Townshend spoke of taking me, but they were obliged to go down to her château in Touraine Thursday, and so I heard no more about it. Where is your dog-cart? Is it all trimmed with flowers? What color have you chosen? Oh, I know. It is pink. The flower in your coat! Will you drive by these windows and let me see you? I never saw a *Fête des Fleurs.*"

The Frenchman's muscles twitched with excitement. He felt that the meshes were closing around the girl. He was already winning.

"I can show it you from here. Come to the window."

Rose flew past him and leaned her body out of the window.

"Oh, *there* it is! How perfectly lovely! What heaps of roses! What *heaps* of them! And all *over* the harness! I didn't know you put them on the horses. That hoop above him makes it look like the pictures of a troika. I suppose the girl you take will wear pink. What are all those loose flowers for on the floor and the seat?"

"They are to fling at the other carriages. It is a battle of flowers, you understand."

"Do you aim for the people directly? And do they throw theirs to you?"

"Certainly. But would you like to see this one? Will you go with me?"

"In that lovely cart? I should think I would! I have a new pink gown that is quite the prettiest one I ever had. Oh, and a pink parasol and a rose-colored hat! I shall just match! I have sent my maid over to the new house, so will you give me an extra ten minutes to dress?"

"All the time you wish! I will amuse myself here!"

"Give me until four o'clock!" cried Rose, running out of the room like an enthusiastic child.

The Frenchman clasped and unclasped his hands in his nervous excitement, and walked the floor like a caged animal. If only no one would come in until four o'clock to warn her! He consulted the clock and compared it with his watch fifty times. He started like a criminal at every sound. The butler's face when Rose consented to receive him alone was only a foretaste of the delicious revenge he would receive when all Paris would be raising the eyebrows in the same way only one short hour from now.

At ten minutes after four Rose came in hurriedly.

"I couldn't help it," she panted. "Everything went wrong. I couldn't find my clothes. I think Marie has

hidden every hair-pin and one of every pair of shoes, and the very things I needed most were the things she has packed. But, after all, I did pretty well to keep you waiting only ten minutes overtime, *didn't* I?"

The Frenchman could only gasp at the girl's wonderful fresh beauty. Her eagerness sent a brilliancy to her eyes and her vitality made his blood tingle. The fragrance of her laces, the delicate odor of laces which have lain on a dainty woman's breast, and her breath upon his cheek in the eagerness of her explanation, maddened the Frenchman. His eyes glistened as much at the unique situation of being utterly alone with so beautiful a creature, as at the sight of her loveliness. His imagination was aflame on the instant, but he conquered himself, by so violent an effort that the veins in his temples beat like pulses, and led the way downstairs.

Rose, all innocent of the false step she was taking, sprang into the rose-trimmed dog-cart with a laugh of sheer delight. The porter of the hotel and the valet of the Frenchman stared in surprise. Raoul saw it with a pleasure such as the just cannot feel. Malicious joy has a poignancy which virtue never knows. He had rightly planned. He was about to blight the girl's pure name, and yet to accomplish it in a safe and subtle manner which appealed to his æsthetic mind. He was not soiling his hands, nor acting contrary to his code of honor. Was the Bois not a public thoroughfare? Would not all Paris see that he was candid in his methods? Had not the American come of her own free will?

He could not fail to be proud of the tremendous sensation Rose produced from the moment they passed the guards at the gate and swung into the long line of carriages which moved slowly up and down the avenue, two on each side of the row of gendarmes, going in contrary

directions. The beauty of the girl, her exquisite rose costume, the handsome cart, more artistically trimmed than any of the others and exhaling the delicious and costly odor of hundreds of drooping roses, aroused the utmost enthusiasm in the row of carriages next theirs, and from the thousands of spectators which lined the foot-path. Those who had engaged chairs rose to their feet and commented audibly upon her beauty. Others crowded forward. Men and women stood upon benches, and a perfect rain of flowers fell upon her.

At first the girl started and seemed a trifle frightened. But the marquis reassured her, directed her how to fling hers in return, and in five minutes the American girl was as completely in the spirit of the French sport as if she had been born a Parisienne. Stout old women with their families; padded and painted old men with monocles; women of the little world in couples and with cavaliers; American tourists with their Baedekers; pale young Frenchmen on the alert for something new; spruce negro men with white *cocottes;* gayly dressed negresses driven by white coachmen; beautiful Frenchwomen who drove simply to see and only bowed when a flower fell into their carriages; enamelled old women in lace hats and pink parasols, with wheezy poodles—all Paris, in fact! Up and down they drove and looked and guessed and gossiped, and flung their innocent flowers at each other with many a gay compliment and malicious *sotto voce.*

Rose saw almost nothing of the sensation she was creating, but the Frenchman at her side smiled at her enthusiasm and bit his lips to hide their twitching when the shrugs and stares of his world met his eye. They drove for two hours, and in that time the American girl had lost, by an innocent American custom, what she never could regain in the eyes of Paris society.

Although glancing furtively about, peering on each

side, lest any of the sweetness of his revenge should be lost to him, Raoul failed to see one man—one American who was standing near the entrance as they drove out, and who saw the Frenchman's shrug in answer to a woman's raised eyebrows.

"*Encore une demi-vierge!*" murmured the woman in the victoria, with a sneer.

Townshend understood.

An hour later, while the Marquis d'Auteuil was laughing over his *coup de malice* with a dozen of his friends, the American strode into the Jockey Club, his face a dull red and his gray eyes blazing with murder. He brushed aside the little Frenchmen in his path like so many noisome flies. D'Auteuil saw him coming and rose to his feet.

Townshend approached the group in utter silence, and when he was near enough he struck one fierce blow with his clenched fist and knocked the marquis quite ten feet away. For a moment no one spoke. Then the clatter and hissing of the French tongue began and rose in volume, until it was Babel. The Frenchman was assisted to his feet, and when he could stand Townshend reached out before any one could stop him and knocked him down again, quite senseless this time.

Fifty voices demanded an explanation, but with the one sentence :

"M. le Marquis will explain!" Townshend turned on his heel and left the Jockey Club.

CHAPTER XVIII

On Sunday morning early the Marquis d'Auteuil sent for his friends, the Comte d'Arcy, the Comte de Rouen, and the Duc de Trèves.

The first two came at once. The third still could not be found.

Raoul sat up in bed when his friends entered, and they flung up their hands in amazement at the sight of his eye. The flesh was green and purple down to his jawbone.

"*Mon Dieu!* what a blow the American ox has dealt you! You will not be fit to be seen for three weeks!" cried d'Arcy.

"And the worst of it is that the manicure is coming at twelve, and I must see her. She could not come yesterday, and my hands must not be allowed to go any longer. She is so very pretty—she must not see me like this! What shall I do?"

"Shall you challenge the American?" asked the Comte de Rouen.

"I am not sure," answered Raoul, fretfully, flinging himself back upon the ruffled pillows. "What do you advise?"

"Of course you would not lose in the eyes of those of us who know you as a brave man, if you should ignore the American pig, and consider the whole matter beneath contempt. But there were others — visitors at the club — who saw and will criticise. The Russian Ambassador, Prince Orloff, and the Austrian military

attaché were there. Also Sir Arthur Carteret and several other foreigners."

"All those were there? And they saw?" asked the marquis, sitting up again. "Then there is but one thing to do, and that is to challenge him!"

"Let us hope that he will choose swords, then, for I have heard that he is one of those trick shots—the sort of a fellow who can put a hole through a half-franc piece, or shoot the point from a lead-pencil!" said Rouen, cheerfully.

"Will you two be my friends?" asked Raoul, nervously.

"With pleasure," said Rouen. "I will draw up the challenge at once."

D'Arcy approached the bed, and said, in a low tone:

"Are you going to Madame de Briancourt's this afternoon?"

"No!" cried Raoul, sharply. "How can I, with this eye?"

"There you are wrong, my friend. I went to Madame de Trèves's and Madame de Fleury's, and I was handsomely received. All Paris will shrug the shoulders if you do not go. As for the eye, I know a man who paints such discolorations so that no one would suspect. You must go late, just before the candles are lighted, when there will be the greatest crowd, and remain but for a moment. Believe me, I, your friend, tell you it is the only thing to do."

"Then, if there is such a person, why may I not send for him before the little manicure comes?" said Raoul, eagerly.

"You may. I will fetch him at once. He lives close by. But stay! Let us first discover the whereabouts of madame your mother. If she sees us, or hears about last night, we are undone. Women are not friendly to duelling."

Raoul rang for his man.

"Where are my mother and sister?" he asked. "Are they at mass?"

"No, M. le Marquis. They went to Vrianault last night by the evening train. You will remember that to-day is the anniversary of your noble father's death."

A greenish pallor overspread Raoul's face at this more than unwelcome news. It was their first visit to Vrianault since he had sold the tapestries. Before they discovered their loss, he had hoped to make their re-purchase possible by his engagement to Maria. His life was ruined! And he owed it all to Rose! Even the pain in his eye! Ah! he was not fully avenged upon her yet. He believed that Townshend was her accepted lover, and he would *kill* the American.

"My poor friend!" cried Rouen, springing to the bedside. "What is there in that news to disturb you so? The expression of your face is quite frightful!"

"It is nothing!" said Raoul, loosening the collar to the jacket of his pink silk pyjamas. "I only wish you to hasten with the challenge. When I think of his blow and the pain I suffer I choke with rage. I wish to kill the American! The sooner the better!"

"Take care that he does not kill *you!* He does not understand the code. See that you shoot before he has time to aim properly."

Presently d'Arcy came hurrying in with the little hair-dresser on the corner, in whose shop Maria had waited the day before. He was delighted with his task, and in an hour, unless a strong light fell upon Raoul's face, one would not have known that anything had happened. The swelling had all but disappeared under the poultices which his valet had applied so faithfully during the night, and there remained only the bloodshot eye, which, as the little hair-dresser explained, might have come from a cold, or too much wine the night before.

"And now," said d'Arcy, cheerfully, "Rouen and I will wait upon the American and give him one grand fright with a French challenge. I dare say he never fought a duel in his life. In the mean time, amuse yourself well with your little manicure. I will wager Lili is not alone!"

"I think that you are mistaken in what you say," said Raoul, turning upon his friend hastily. "Lili is at home, alone and ill. Even I am not to visit her until to-morrow!"

"Ah, indeed! Well, I retract my words. *Au revoir!* We shall return at four with the American's reply. I fancy he will not pass a very tranquil evening!"

As they left the hôtel the two men turned and looked at each other.

"At home and ill! The little cat! If Raoul ever learns the truth he will have a second duel on his hands."

"How did you discover it?" asked Rouen.

"The hair-dresser told me, as we walked along. Raoul's little manicure is his niece, and she saw them at the Gare St. Lazare."

"It is very unwise of Trèves," said Rouen.

"I think it is most amusing! What spirit the little monkey shows! I congratulate Trèves with all my heart!"

"What a farce it is! Lili and Raoul each fancying the other true, while each amuses himself with some one else!"

"And all the time loving each other with true and sincere devotion!"

"You think so?"

"Ah, I know it! Raoul's marriage is at the bottom of Lili's affair with Trèves. Trèves has pursued her fruitlessly for two years, but she never would look at him. Now she has begun so daringly, I think she wishes

to bring on a duel, hoping either to break off the marriage by the publicity of it, or that Raoul will be killed!"

"Raoul killed? Ah! but you *do* think that she loves him, then! I had not believed it so serious."

"We have not come to the end of this matter, my friend. I assure you, I am not an alarmist, but I take a grave view."

In less than an hour after Rouen and d'Arcy had left Raoul, the little manicure staggered into her uncle's shop, her face all swollen and bleeding and her eyes streaming with tears.

Rushing through the shop to avoid the curious gaze of her uncle's customers, the girl slammed the door of the inner room and screamed out the story of her ill-treatment. Her aunt and uncle listened with combs suspended in the air.

"I told him about Lili and the Duc de Trèves, and he threw his hand-mirror at me and pushed me out of the room with such violence that I fell down the stairs!"

"You dared to tell him about the duc!" cried her aunt, seizing her by the shoulder and shaking her. "You little fool! It is a miracle that he did not break your neck! How dared you! *Mon Dieu!* I would as soon have thought of exploding dynamite!"

"He shall not have us both!" cried the girl. "He has told me that he loves me only, and I have believed him. Then Madame Clemence told my mother about Lili, and I taxed him with it, and he dared not deny it. He only laughed and said I was a little country mouse and must not visit the city mouse, and that made me so jealous and so angry that I laughed in his face and told him that the country mouse knew where the city mouse was at that moment, and that was at the Hôtel Henri IV. at St. Germain with his *dear* friend the Duc de Trèves, because I saw them get on the train together yesterday! Oh, how my face hurts!"

The girl broke off in a torrent of tears.

" Well, well, but go on !" cried her aunt, impatiently.

"Ah! if you only knew how he has made love to me!" sobbed the girl. " It is impossible that he should love us both."

" It is not at all impossible," said her aunt, roughly. " Men like the marquis can love a dozen like you. I have warned you too often to have any patience with you now. Hold up your head ! You have probably brought on a duel, and your fortune may be made !"

" I do not want it to be made !" wailed the poor child, flinging herself on the bed in bitter sobbing. "As if I could look at any other man after the marquis ! If I have made him fight a duel for that other—that cat, Lili —I shall kill myself !"

" No, no, my pretty pet !" said her uncle, soothingly. " Don't cry so. Turn your face to the light and let me bathe it with this healing balm. Oh, the poor cheek ! See, how good and cool that feels ! *Mon Dieu!* wife, go and attend to our customer. He is roaring like a hyena ! There now, little one. I will draw the curtain and you must try to sleep."

. When the Comte de Rouen returned at four o'clock with Townshend's acceptance of the Marquis's challenge, Rouen narrowly watched his friend's face as he mentioned the American's seconds.

" Sir Arthur Carteret and—the Duc de Trèves !"

" The Duc de Trèves !" exclaimed Raoul, starting.

" Certainly ! Why do you seem so disturbed by it ?"

" It is nothing," answered the marquis, recovering himself. " Only it seems as odd to hear of Trèves being the second of my adversary as if you or d'Arcy should be."

" But no. Trèves is a very great friend of the American. He borrows money of him !"

"Ah! I wondered why it was!" said Raoul, nodding his head. "Where did they find Trèves? I sent for him yesterday from the club, and again this morning, but he could not be found."

"I do not know," answered Rouen, discreetly dropping his eyes under Raoul's searching gaze. "He called upon Sir Arthur in answer to a note he sent as soon as the challenge was received."

"How did the American pig deport himself?" asked Raoul, eagerly. "Was he frightened? Did he turn pale? It is one thing to knock down a man who is not looking for a blow and therefore cannot defend himself, and it is another to bare one's breast to a sword when both are prepared."

"He displayed admirable nerve and no little knowledge of a gentleman's part in a duel. But, for your sake, I regret to say that he has chosen pistols. Are you a good shot?"

"None better!" said the marquis, haughtily. His vanity resented his friend's choice of words.

"Good! I am content. You will see that the place chosen is Chalons-sur-Marne. It was Victor de Trèves's idea. All the troops are ordered to a place two miles out of Chalons for the *manoeuvres*, so that the spot he has selected will be quite deserted. The time chosen is Tuesday at five o'clock, if it is fair. If not, Wednesday morning at sunrise."

"Admirable!" said Raoul, pressing his friend's hands. "How can I thank you?"

"By saying nothing about it. D'Arcy and Sir Arthur are selecting the doctors and the referee, whom I think will be the old Duc de Fleury, as he boasts of nineteen duels. As for myself, I go to call upon my mother, and in an hour d'Arcy and I will come for you on our way to Madame de Briancourt's. Shall your American girl be there, do you think?"

"Certainly not! How could she, when she knows no one?"

But Rose Hollenden was at that very moment making her way to the chair of the Duchesse de Briancourt, who sat on a raised dais, with her crutches beside her.

The Baronne Valencia was ahead and reached out her hand for Rose to present her, but Maria pushed forward and said:

"I should be presented *first*, Madame Valencia, if you please!"

Rose colored and drew back, fearing that she had seemed aggressive, but the duchesse, after surveying Maria for an instant through her lorgnon, held out her hand to Rose, saying in English:

"And is this your beautiful American Rose, my dear baronne? Ah, my child, you have in your country a wonderful flower called the American Beauty Rose. I think it must have been named after one look into your face."

Maria reared her crest like an angry serpent, and turned away with ill-disguised fury. It was too humiliating! To think, after all these years of waiting to be introduced into the Faubourg St. Germain, that she should be so rudely ignored and that big, awkward American so nauseatingly flattered!

The baronne was delighted at the little *contretemps*. And she stood and guarded Rose from her sister's venom until the two young French girls, Francine and Lulu de Fleury, came up and bore Rose away.

"You must meet maman! It will be quite a triumph for us!" declared Francine.

"You will never know how impatient we were to see you!" cried Lulu. "How we poor French girls do long for your American freedom! And oh, my word! what

good use you do make of yours! We have screamed with joy over some of the things you have done since you have been here! And *what* a beauty you are! No doubt you will quite cut us out, but we are going to take you on!"

"Why, where did you learn such English?" asked Rose.

"Oh, we have learned it ourselves. We had an English maid last year, and now we come into town twice a week to take lessons of the handsomest Englishman you ever saw. Maman would be quite crazy if she knew. Don't you think we are clever? Maman hates the English and Americans so that she can hardly breathe. Oh, it will be too delicious to present you to her!"

"But—" said Rose, protestingly.

"Here she is! Maman, this is the young American girl, Mademoiselle Hollenden — Rose Hollenden. She speaks beautiful French. See, isn't she a beauty?"

"Ah, of course she is an American!" said the duchesse, surveying Rose scornfully from head to foot. "No one but an English or an American woman would wear such a hat!"

"Why, what is the matter with my hat?" asked Rose, wondering, as she had been obliged to do scores of times before, where the French politeness was, of which she had heard so much all her life. She put her hand up to feel if anything were wrong. The hat was a fine, transparent straw, covered with white ostrich plumes, and it was one of those large, graceful hats which only American women can wear with dignity.

"It is too big," said the duchesse. "No French face could stand it. Besides, *we* would not consider it good taste. But it does well enough for an English girl."

Shirley saw Rose's signal of distress and took a step nearer. He feared she was losing her nerve. Besides that, he was aroused in an instant by any criticism of one of Miss Schermerhorn's hats.

"But, maman, Mademoiselle Hollenden is an American. There is the greatest difference! Pray try to remember!"

"English or American—it is all the same!" said the duchesse, with a wave of the hand. "I can't tell them apart."

Shirley's fine, thin whistle reached his sister's ear alone. It was a few bars of "All Coons Look Alike to Me!" And it saved her. She recovered herself and listened with admirable coolness to the old Frenchwoman's rudeness.

"I am told that you come from the South," she said.

"Oh yes," said Rose. "My grandmother was a Southern woman."

"But they are so dirty, generally. I dare say your grandmother was clean—of course, yes. But I knew some people once who came from Brazil, and they were very dirty."

"Oh, but I don't mean South America when I say the South! I mean the southern part of the United States. We never call anybody Americans except those who come from the United States. The others are South Americans, or Canadians, or Mexicans," said Rose, eagerly.

The duchesse waved her off.

"It is of no use. I am not interested, and I shall not even try to remember."

The young American girl stiffened and took a step away from the old Frenchwoman.

"What are you running away for? You are very pretty. I like to look at you. You are the first American I ever saw!"

Lulu and Francine nudged each other delightedly.

"Really I cannot stop longer," said Rose, coloring with annoyance.

"Come with us," whispered Francine. "People are

staring at you so. They think you are beautiful, but of course it is mostly about yesterday. You will be surrounded in an instant, if you don't hasten."

They hurried her through the beautiful house, which was beautiful even for Paris, and took her into the garden, placing themselves before her like carved lions at a gate.

"Now do tell us about your affair with the Marquis d'Auteuil! And how did you ever dare! A man with his reputation! Not worse than Victor de Trèves, to be sure, or my little Rouen, or Lulu's d'Arcy—all wretched little creatures when compared with your lovely brother or that handsome Mr. Townshend. But will you ask us to stop with you some night? And then when everybody has gone to bed, we will get out of the window and see Paris! What fun it will be! Lulu and I will be obliged to mask, but you needn't. People would simply shrug and say 'Oh, it is only the American girl!'"

"Why, what *do* you mean?" gasped Rose. "Get out of the window and see Paris at night, alone?"

"Of course! With three of us it would be quite safe."

"But I would be afraid. I will ask Shirley to take us, or Mr. Townshend."

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* you don't understand! We mean to go to places where ladies cannot go. We mean to have the freedom that young American girls have in your country. For example, there is the Bal des Quatres Arts. It is one of the most indecent things in Paris. Students and their mistresses and the wickedest models in town go there. The women wear almost no clothes, and run up and down quite nude, and the men throw champagne on them—"

"Stop!" cried Rose, starting to her feet with a crimson face. "Do you mean to tell me that you would look upon such indecency even if it were permitted? And

you *dare* to ask me to go with you ! Oh, it is too horrible to think about !"

The two young French girls looked at each other in perplexity. What was this American so hot about ?

" But," said Lulu, " have you no curiosity about such things ? Or does your American freedom permit you to satisfy it in another way ?"

They both laughed out merrily at this, but Rose stared at them uncomprehendingly.

" Tell me," she said, " of what do you imagine our American freedom consists ?"

" Why, of doing everything that a young girl could wish."

" Well," said Rose, hesitating and thinking, in order to be quite accurate, " that is quite true."

" Very well, then !" cried both French girls triumphantly. " In America you would be permitted, then, to go to the Bal des Quatres Arts ! *One* night at that ball, and there would be nothing left for us to learn. We should have seen it all with our own eyes !"

Rose looked from one to the other speechless and unable to think what to say first. There was the work of a lifetime before her if she were to undertake to make them understand. These simple-minded little French girls, dressed in white muslin, both under twenty years of age, and daughters of one of the oldest and best houses in France !

" The chief difference between your country and ours," pursued Francine, " is that the things your young girls wish to do are permitted, and in ours we must escape surveillance and do them on the sly. *You* are allowed to be hugged and kissed by your young men all you wish. What do you think ? Neither one of us was ever kissed until a year ago ! Isn't that a shame ?"

" How did you begin ?" asked Rose.

" At Dinard. We *love* Dinard, because there are so

many English and Americans there, and they are up to any larks. But I must say your Americans are a little slow. They are quite satisfied with a few kisses. They are not like Europeans! No! Still, we like them. They are so awfully chivalrous. We put on boys' clothes, and got out of the windows to go to meet them, and the watchman saw us in the garden and told maman. And what do you think those Americans did? They said it was *they* the watchman saw, and they stuck to it until maman believed it. She scolded them terribly for being there, but they said they had come to pay a visit to *her*, and were quite shocked to discover that she closed the house so early. That *was* a grind on her, for she sleeps half the day in addition."

"It's a good thing for us that she does," said her sister, poutingly. "She wakes up when we least expect it, as it is, and has all but caught us heaps of times."

"Tell us," urged Lulu, "*will* you go with us to the ball?"

"No, a thousand times no!" cried Rose. "If you took me there by force I would close my eyes!"

"And not look?" cried both French girls at once.

"Certainly *not!*"

The two young girls looked at each other, nodding their heads.

"It is quite true, then, what Madame Blanc says. We have read her books and heard her talk. She *said* that American women were *too* perfect!"

"You have no *tempérament!*" cried Francine, derisively.

"Perhaps not," said Rose, coolly. "But at least I am not nasty."

"Do you call us nasty?" asked Lulu, without a trace of anger.

"I call you the vilest-minded girls I ever met," said Rose. "I never even think of the things you have sug-

gested to-day. You insult me when you think me capable of it."

The amazement of the young French girls was quite sincere.

" Then of what does your American freedom consist ?" asked Lulu.

" As if I could ever explain to you !" cried Rose, starting up with tears in her eyes. " You make my heart ache with the utter decadence of your point of view !"

" Don't get angry," said Francine. They each took her arm and strolled over towards the fountain which played in the centre of the great garden. White marble statues were placed about, and the landscape gardener had done his best to make a beautiful setting for the grand old house.

Rose gazed about her in admiration. She was passionately fond of sculpture, form appealing to her more than color. But it was the Greek she loved, without knowing why. Its purity appealed to the very highest in her earnest young nature. The Roman was frankly voluptuous, but the French was worse. It was suggestive. The minds of the sculptors were stamped upon the marble faces of their statues, and Rose felt the taint in her soul. How differently, if she had had the choosing, would she have peopled this magnificent old garden with marble figures ! But as she looked into the faces of the painted and enamelled pygmies who strolled along the gravelled paths and breathed the scented air, she realized how sadly out of place her pure-browed Hermes and her virgin Diana would be at a Paris garden-party.

In their promenade the three young girls came upon two sedan-chairs facing each other. As they approached, one old woman put her head out and beckoned to them.

" Come," said Lulu. " It is our great-aunt playing at bézique with the Duchesse de Briancourt's mother. One

is eighty-seven and the other is ninety-three. Great-aunt was such a beauty in her time that she does not even yet realize that she is old."

Both old ladies laid down their cards at the young girl's approach.

" Is this your American girl ?" asked the Princesse d'Annuncio, Francine's great-aunt.

Rose bit her lip. She was being called " the American girl " so often it had got to sounding in her ear as if she were an educated pig that all were anxious to see put through his tricks. But she soon forgot the scrutiny of the old lady in her wonder at the youthful appearance of these grandmothers.

The Princesse d'Annuncio was dressed in pale-blue embroidered silk, with ruffles of white chiffon. Her wig was blond and dressed in the latest fashion. Her eyebrows were painted on with exquisite care, her cheeks enamelled, and her lips rouged. A jaunty tulle toque with blue forget-me-nots for garniture had tulle ties finishing in a smart bow under her chin, hiding the hideous bagginess of her yellow neck. Black silk mitts covered the swollen veins and wrinkles of her poor, rheumatic old hands, whose fingers blazed with rings. The other old woman, the Marquise d'Albret, was done similarly in red. Rose found the old women of Paris most wonderful. What vitality ! What spirit ! What a grasp on the fashions and affairs of the day !

" She speaks marvellous French for an American !" said the princesse to her companion.

" She has a good skin," said the marquise, bluntly. " Tell me, mademoiselle, what face-wash do you use ?"

" I don't use any !" laughed Rose.

" Fine teeth, too," murmured the princesse.

Rose closed her lips and pressed them into a fine red line.

" Don't do that. It is very unbecoming, and it makes

wrinkles to laugh. I never do more than smile. It is easy if one learns how," said the princesse.

" She is very, very rich, too," said the marquise, quite as if Rose did not understand. Their scant courtesy stung the young girl. She moved uneasily.

" Come," said Francine, " we must not stop longer. Mademoiselle Hollenden insisted upon seeing you, my great-aunt, because she had heard of your beauty."

The old woman grunted her approval of Rose's good taste, and as they turned away they met two men, friends of Francine's, who insisted upon being presented to the American.

" Ah," said one, tapping Rose's skirts with his stick, " here is a young girl who is willing to brave the opinion of all Paris for a proper view of the *Fête des Fleurs !*"

" What do you mean, sir ?" said Rose, haughtily, drawing her gown back from his familiarity.

" What lips for kissing !" said the Comte de Blouet.

Rose turned furiously to the two young girls, and found them smiling maliciously. She felt the hostility all about her, and she realized that she need expect no help from her companions. She must rescue herself.

" Come," she said, laying her strong hand on Francine's arm with a grip of steel. " Excuse me from meeting any more of your friends, and let us find the Baronne Valencia and my brother."

Rose's grasp was not to be disobeyed, and the French girls took her to her chaperon.

The baronne was speaking excitedly to a large group, who fell silent at Rose's approach.

" Not a word before her," said the baronne, laying her finger upon her lip. She called Shirley and gave Rose into his charge. Then she sent Townshend and the young Duc de Briancourt to talk to her also, with instructions to let no one else approach, and thus, sur-

rounded by the three of them, Rose slowly followed the baronne into the house.

The baronne was much disturbed. She had just been told the story of the *Fête des Fleurs* and of Townshend's swift vengeance at the Jockey Club. As yet, however, no one knew of the duel, as the Frenchmen considered a duel with an American nothing to be proud of. The polite disbelief of all her friends when she declared the American girl's innocence resolved her upon bold measures. She went directly to the chair of the Duchesse de Briancourt and whispered the whole affair in her ear.

" Your cousin, then, must intend to marry her," murmured the duchesse.

The baronne hesitated. It was Sterling's secret, but Rose's good name trembled in the balance.

" He loves her, certainly, but as to whether he can marry her or not—that is for her to say."

The duchesse spread out her hands, as one who hears but does not understand.

" Your cousin risked his life to save mine," she said. " I will avenge your American Rose. Call her to me."

" Rose !" called the baronne, lightly.

Every one in the room turned to listen.

" The Duchesse de Briancourt is asking for you."

The American girl crossed the room, followed by her three men whom the baronne had set to guard her. Women put up their lorgnons and whispered. Men stared.

" I have made up my mind to take a few steps through the rooms with only one crutch. Will you let me lean on you, my dear ? I would trust that strong young arm of yours more readily than that of any Frenchman I know."

A gleam of malice came into the eyes of the beautiful old Frenchwoman. A ripple ran through the room, as when the wind blows through a cornfield.

" Lean as hard as ever you like, dear duchesse," said Rose. " I am very strong."

They were both still standing on the dais, just about to step down, when the old butler Charles flung open the door and announced:

" Monsieur le Marquis d'Auteuil! Monsieur le Comte de Rouen! Monsieur le Comte d'Arcy!"

Rouen and d'Arcy, fearing that something would happen, did not enter behind their friend, as Raoul had expected, but hastened around and came in by a side door. It was not brave, but it was prudent.

As the marquis sprang forward with outstretched hands, the old Frenchwoman straightened herself and clasped Rose's arm more tightly. Raoul perceived Rose too late to retreat.

" My dear Madame de Briancourt!" cried the young man.

" Charles!" said the old noblewoman, holding her beautiful white head like an empress—" Charles, show this gentleman to the door!"

A chorus of sibilant exclamations greeted these words. The butler appeared in the doorway.

" But, madame—duchesse—" stammered the young man.

" The door, Charles!"

Raoul drew himself up.

" I am at a loss, madame, to understand the cause of this treatment at your hands!"

" Not my hands, but my shoulders bear witness to the reason, M. le Marquis!" answered the duchesse.

Sympathetic exclamations of horror broke from all parts of the room. The Marquis d'Auteuil was hunted from the house by the indignant glances of his best friends.

The duchesse drew Rose's fresh lips down to her painted ones and kissed her before them all.

"I never had intended to mention one of their names," she murmured. "But my life was saved by your brave countryman—and— Ah, my child, never say that all the old blood of France has died out! Take me to my boudoir. I tremble with fatigue."

The young footman who assisted Charles made a dash for the kitchens.

"There will be a duel between the Marquis d'Auteuil and our young duc!" he cried.

CHAPTER XIX

ON Monday morning his intimate friends were almost hissing the name of the Marquis d'Auteuil. The news of his ignominious dismissal from the house of the most powerful leader in the Faubourg St. Germain had spread like wildfire.

Paris is a curious social study. Not one man or woman but knew that the Marquis d'Auteuil had been one of the men who escaped from that famous window, but they knew it without words, by lifted eyebrows, a spreading out of the hands, or a shrug, and as long as his cowardice remained nebulous they received and admired him. The moment it became articulate they drew their skirts aside in sibilant horror. He was a leper, and no one recognized that fact more poignantly than the dainty, thin-skinned Frenchman himself, to whom approval from his world of fashion was the breath of life.

In the morning he walked in the boulevards and was cut right and left. No one saw him. He went home a desperate criminal, ready to take his own life, or to give it up in a mad thirst for the lives of the men who had brought these insults upon him. He sent a challenge to the Duc de Trèves, and accepted the one from the Duc de Briancourt with savage joy. He was quite drunk with excitement. He made his will, destroyed all his papers, and gave himself up for dead. With three duels on his hands he felt sure that he was doomed. Then his recklessness settled down into a sort of pale dignity—

the dignity of a man who feels that the shadow of death is upon him.

Sir Arthur Carteret and Townshend were riding in the Bois that same afternoon, when the Marquis d'Auteuil appeared, sad, silent, and dressed entirely in black.

"Now you shall see for yourself," said Sir Arthur. "I assure you I never saw anything so cruel as the way his best friends treated him this morning. They said he had disgraced French manhood and impugned his own honor. They deceive themselves so successfully that a poor, thick-headed Englishman is almost persuaded into believing them sincere. Their indignation was so honest and so complete, it was hardly possible to realize that they had known his guilt all along."

Scarcely had Sir Arthur finished speaking before both men were arrested by the spectacle of Raoul's dog-cart being stopped by little knots of his friends, who swarmed around him as if he were the lion of a levée, congratulating him and flattering him as only the French know how to flatter.

"Well, by the Lord Harry!" said Townshend. "What do you make of that?"

"We can't stop and listen," said Sir Arthur. "How can we find out?"

"Go and talk to some woman, and ask no questions!" said the American. "Then she will tell you everything."

They chose Mademoiselle Francine de Fleury, who was taking Mrs. Sharp, the wife of the American Ambassador, to drive.

"Look at him!" she cried, as they rode up. "The hero of three duels! Quite like d'Artagnan! Oh, it is too delicious! We must go and speak with him."

As the young French girl, who had been left to die in the fire by this same man, drove away to congratulate him on the glory of his three duels, Townshend, who was helping to make him famous, cut his pretty mare

savagely as he made use of a good, honest, American expletive.

"Well, damn these Parisians!" he said.

"Look here, Townshend," said the Englishman, reddening, "it isn't a very polite question, but I only ask it for your own good. I fear treachery in this duel. You know my opinion of d'Arcy and Rouen. Are you as good a shot as they say?"

The American brought the mare down to a walk.

"Would you think I was boasting," he said, hesitatingly, "if I say that I am willing to shoot from my pocket?"

"Without aiming?" asked Sir Arthur, with dropped jaw.

Townshend nodded.

The Englishman gave a short laugh.

"Do you intend to kill him?" he said.

"I was just wondering," said Townshend, "whether I would not be rendering a service to civilization and the cause of the general good, by wiping him from the face of the earth."

Suddenly he paused, remembering the many controversies he had had with the Hollendens and Sir Arthur, in which he had enthusiastically defended the French. Townshend found himself looking at Paris with Rose's eyes, seeing for the first time how continental customs and the Gallic code of honor must be striking the young American girl. As with most men, love was making him more alive. He felt more keen, more sensitive to impressions, more psychological. The woman's point of view was continually coming into his mental vision, rendering him uncertain of himself, less assured. His unconscious masculine finality of judgment was being shaken. Things which heretofore he had accepted because they belonged to the continental established order, in whose atmosphere he had lived so

long, he began to question and to discuss with himself. He never spoke to Rose about them, but he was realizing, as others of his countrymen have done before him and will do again, how one pair of fresh American eyes on Europe will occasionally make the most habituated expatriate sit up.

The marquis's extraordinary popularity, on account of his three duels, produced so strong a revulsion of feeling in Townshend against the fickle Paris world, that he all but hated them for the very superficiality which he had so often laughed at and defended to his Anglo-Saxon friends, whose sense of justice had been jarred by the marvellous thinness of the French national character. But it is a different matter when the careless onlooker turns into the participant, and the brutal fickleness of the Gaul is directed towards one's own heart and soul.

Not being theatrical, not having blazoned his bravery to the world, there were even some whose lives he had helped to save who never knew positively that he had rendered them any assistance, and who never had spoken to him about it, on a mere rumor. This had caused him only a secret grim amusement hitherto; but now, to see the Marquis d'Auteuil, whose contemptible cowardice everybody knew, placed on the pinnacle of admiration, even by his victims themselves, roused his wrath against the characters of his French friends as it never had been roused before.

He was so morose going down in the train to Chalons that Sir Arthur endeavored to cheer him by light gossip.

"They tell me," he said, "that d'Auteuil had those sweet hands of his manicured the last thing before leaving. I believe he is vainer of those little white hands of his than any woman. It is curious how the French adore beauty so."

Townshend roused himself and looked out of the window.

" It is going to be fair," he said. " I believe that we can fight to-night."

" I suppose you will be glad to have it over," suggested Sir Arthur.

" It will give me a more tranquil night's sleep," said Townshend, carelessly.

The Englishman laughed.

" Then you can't mean to kill him," he said.

" Why can't I ?"

" Because you would never sleep tranquilly if you had."

" Thank you for your good opinion, but I should never consider killing a rat murder."

" Certainly not ! However, at the risk of being a nuisance to you, I am going to warn you again to be on your guard against treachery. Since the Duc de Trèves withdrew from being your second, after he accepted d'Auteuil's challenge, I have felt more than ever that it will be the case of you and me against five Frenchmen. Remember, the Duc de Fleury, unless you settle things with a ball first, will surely favor his own countryman. Briancourt would have been my choice of a second in Trèves's place, but he too, being obliged to attend strictly to his own affair, almost compelled you to select Gaspard de Blouet. But he it was who said to Miss Hollenden : ' What lips for kissing !' I only discovered it too late. He had already accepted as your second."

Townshend sat up.

" I didn't tell you this in order to make you angry, but just to assure you of my belief that an Anglo-Saxon cannot fight with a Gaul, as they would fight each other. If your country goes to war with Spain, you will see what I mean. They will disregard the honorable side of war, and you will feel as if you were fighting with Indians. So don't trust too much to the honor of our French friends. They are counting on your igno-

rance of professional duelling, and — well, you and I wouldn't call their methods honorable."

"The English are never alarmists," said Townshend, "so I will think seriously of what you say. You mean that, except for your support, I shall be alone?"

"Quite."

"Very well," said the American.

The train stopped at the little station of Chalons-sur-Marne, and Sir Arthur's man handed the bags through the windows to the porters outside.

No one seemed at all interested in the little party, and only the porters asked if they were going to the *manoeuvres*.

"The name of the hôtel here," said Townshend, as they drove away, "is one of the most delicious things about Chalons—Hôtel High Mother of God!"

"What odious blasphemy!" said Sir Arthur, who was a strong churchman.

"Not as bad as a little shop in Paris called 'At the Little Jesus Christ.' They don't stick at trifles—these French. And, knowing such things, how delightful it was for us when a Frenchman of a certain amount of literary renown came to America recently and wrote a book about Americans, telling anecdotes which were old before I was born, as experiences of his own. Our wretched, joke-loving newspaper men stuffed him full of the baldest lies, and he calmly printed them over his own signature, with the confidence of a child whose vivid imagination causes him to say, 'Mamma, I saw a lion eat a man to-day!' The child fully expects his mother to believe him, and never dreams that the mother will only scold the nurse for telling him such tales at bedtime."

"Foreigners are rather hard on America, aren't they?" said Sir Arthur.

"Yes, especially when they spend six weeks with us and then write a book about our customs."

All Townshend's spirits seemed to have returned. As the hour of five drew near, a look came into his eyes which boded no good to his antagonist, and, even after they had arrived at the spot, Carteret wondered what had occurred to give him such a contented aspect. It was as if his line of action were settled upon, and as if, in his own mind, at least, there could be no doubt as to the final issue.

Townshend and his seconds arrived first, but within a quarter of an hour the French party appeared. By consent of all four of the seconds, the services of the old Duc de Fleury had been called in. He was delighted to participate in his twentieth duel, and took such pleasure, as Townshend said, in the ante-mortem preparations, that the American could not fail to recall that curious trait in the French character. Death is so theatrical in France.

The Comte de Rouen, as the oldest second, finally stepped forward, saluted, and said :

" I have the honor, gentlemen, to beg of you to consider the cause of the quarrel. Will it be possible to arrange matters amicably without the necessity of a duel ?"

Townshend knew that the question was a mere matter of form. Nevertheless, he fancied he saw in the eager manner by which all the Frenchmen gazed at him, that if he weakened, or even assented, the marquis would withdraw and there would be no duel. The Frenchman's notion of honor would have been quite satisfied by the trouble of coming down to Chalons, and thus showing willingness to fight. It seemed so ridiculous, this child's play about honor being satisfied, that the American laughed.

" As you like," he said. " I fully satisfied myself at the Jockey Club !"

The three Frenchmen started as if stung. The mar-

quis's face turned purple. His white hands clenched and unclenched as they hung at his sides. Townshend looked at those hands with a keen interest. He had heard much about them, but never had noticed them before. With the observation of an Indian he noted the curious position of d'Auteuil's fingers.

Sir Arthur stepped up to his principal and muttered:

"That was well done. They never meant to fight."

Townshend watched the loading of the pistols, watched them measure off the distance, saw the swords thrust into the ground, took his position, and waited. Without appearing to glance in his antagonist's direction, he, in reality, never took his eyes off his enemy or his seconds. He saw the two physicians arrange their affairs. The Comte de Blouet was polite, but, as Sir Arthur had warned him, the hearts of both de Fleury and de Blouet were with the marquis.

When the pistols were presented, the marquis seized his and examined it feverishly. Townshend took his with his right hand and dropped it softly into his left—dropped it as carefully yet familiarly as only a man can who has known the intimate use of it for years, who has slept with his hand on its trigger, and who has known the feeling of having it as his only friend in a hostile country.

The Comte de Blouet stepped forward.

"Take your places, gentlemen!"

The seconds fell back and left d'Auteuil and Townshend facing each other.

"I shall have the honor of counting ten, during which time you are required to fire, or not at all!"

There was a moment of tense silence. Then he began to count.

Townshend was standing five paces back of his sword, and simply stood still with his pistol carelessly in his left hand. At "three" d'Auteuil sprang for-

ward and aimed for the American's heart. Townshend dropped his pistol into his right hand, and the two shots were almost simultaneous. D'Auteuil's ball passed through the American's shirt on the left side, without touching him, and Townshend sent a shot into Raoul's left hand, shattering it.

With a shriek of unutterable fury, not of pain, the Frenchman let fall his smoking pistol, and stood glaring at his enemy in a purple rage. He glanced at his mutilated and bleeding hand, and instantly realized that his chief claim to distinction was gone forever. His beautiful left hand was utterly ruined, and ruined by the American's clumsy shot. He only suffered the doctors to bind it up hastily, without examination.

"What! you are never going to have another round?" cried d'Arcy. "Consider! Your honor is quite avenged, and it is your privilege to declare the affair finished."

"Never!" cried Raoul. "Reload, gentlemen! I am not yet avenged!"

He laughed horribly, and Townshend only bowed in acquiescence.

"Now is the time to watch him," said Sir Arthur, as the pistols were presented a second time.

"Take your places, gentlemen!" said Rouen. "I am about to count ten—"

Before the sentence was finished, the Frenchman sprang forward two paces in front of his sword and fired. The ball whistled past Townshend's ear. Without moving a step forward, he raised his pistol and deliberately shot two of the fingers from the marquis's right hand.

It was more grief and chagrin than pain which caused the Marquis d'Auteuil to faint away, even before his wounds were dressed.

The Duc de Fleury and Rouen and d'Arcy came to

shake hands with Townshend, while the doctors were attending to Raoul.

"What do you think of your principal firing before you began to count, M. le Comte?" asked Sir Arthur, with all the Englishman's hatred of foul play.

"Oh, I think you are mistaken," said Rouen. "I really had begun."

Townshend laughed brutally. The Frenchmen colored.

"But I assure you," said d'Arcy, "I heard him with my own ears."

"And I," said the Duc de Fleury.

The Englishman stared.

"Well, you will admit that he stood fully two paces in front of his sword when the shot was fired," said Sir Arthur.

"Not at all!" exclaimed Rouen. "I was looking directly at him. He leaped forward so that his right foot was on a line with the sword. You are quite mistaken, I fear."

"It was his shadow which fell in advance of him," added de Blouet.

Townshend glared at his second for giving lying evidence in favor of the enemy, and then laughed again. What chance does honest testimony stand at a French trial? Townshend and Carteret looked at each other.

"The sun happened to be at my left," said the American. "We stood facing north and south."

"Raoul made rather a good shot," said de Blouet, maliciously, touching the hole in his principal's shirt. "Rather better than you, if I may be allowed to speak so frankly. I had always heard that you were an expert."

His tone was insulting.

The Englishman's red face grew redder.

"Show them, Townshend!" he said.

For an instant vanity tempted the American to give an exhibition of his skill. He glanced around swiftly, longing to produce a theatrical effect. Oh, for the old trick of smashing a lighted lamp! Then he pulled himself together with a shrug of disgust for his weakness.

"I can do better than that," he said. "I can tell you that my second shot took off d'Auteuil's two fingers, and injured the first joint of his thumb so that it will have been amputated before the doctors inform him of his injury. Of the left hand, the whole side, including the thumb, is gone, and the ball came out between his knuckles and his wrist."

Then, without waiting for a reply, he bowed and left them. De Blouet came up to their carriage just as they were about to drive away.

"I congratulate you on the accuracy of your description of my poor friend's wounds," he said, with a snarl. "He will never be able to hold either a pistol or a sword again. You have deprived him not only of his honor, but of his manhood!"

Townshend's eyes gleamed. He thought of his innocent American girl at the *Féte des Fleurs*, and then of the mutilation he had deliberately inflicted on her enemy, and a sense of utter peace and satisfaction descended upon him.

CHAPTER XX

It was with feelings of the liveliest apprehension that Raoul heard of the return of his mother and sister from Vrianault. For several days he had lain in bed contemplating the sight of his bandaged hands. He alternately cursed the American nation for so valiantly defending their women in whatever country they happened to need a champion, and the American butcher for the atrocious mutilation he had inflicted.

The comtesse, his sister, came to see him first. He lay there looking very white and interesting, and she adored him to the extent of forgiving everything.

"Well," she said, "of course we have heard; nevertheless, tell me everything."

"You know about the tapestries?"

"Of course."

"How did our mother bear it?"

"She has said but little. She went to mass a great deal and never slept while we were at Vrianault. She is very brave about it, and she pretended to the servants that she authorized their sale. It did not deceive them in the least, but, at any cost, she has saved her pride."

"Poor, brave little maman! I was so grieved to be obliged to do it. It was to pay a debt of honor, you may be sure."

"Tell me about the duel, if you can be calm. I must not excite you."

"There is very little to tell. I am mutilated forever and ever. Never can I appear without gloves with false

fingers. My glove-maker comes every day with casts. He is very clever, but nothing can ever restore my beautiful hands. Oh, *mon Dieu!* when I think of that barbarian I go mad! I shall yet be avenged!"

"Calm yourself, my poor boy! You may count on my assistance! But tell me why you took the American to the *Fête des Fleurs?*"

"Maria told me that Rose had prejudiced her father against me, and had told him that I only wanted her for her money. So, when M. Hollenden so cruelly insulted me, I resolved to retaliate. We French know well how to pay a grudge!"

"It was dangerous. If you had consulted me, I could have suggested a better way."

"But who would have imagined an American such a famous shot? De Blouet tells me that as an exhibition of the deliberation of his aim and the fatal accuracy of his knowledge of the path the bullets took, he described to all three just the condition in which the doctors would find my hands. And it was exact!"

"If all Americans are such marksmen, I would advise our friends the Spaniards to make their speeches of a more peaceful nature. War might prove disastrous even to so gallant and brave a nation."

"Nonsense!" cried her brother, irritably. "All Americans are not such marksmen. Think of the brilliancy of the Spanish navy! They have three complete fleets! And who ever heard of the American navy?"

"Well, well," said the comtesse, soothingly. "Of course there will be no war. The Americans do a great deal of loud talking, but they are not brave and they never fight. They always 'arbitrate,' if you will notice!"

Her brother smiled at her derision.

"What an admirable spirit you display, my dear Eugénie!"

"Oh, Raoul! my brother! If I could only bear this horrible mutilation for you!"

Childish tears of self-pity came into the Frenchman's eyes.

"Who could have foreseen such butchery!" he cried. "I have fought two duels before this, and no one was wounded on either side!"

"Ah! but this M. Townshend was angry to begin with! Remember that. He has lived in Paris for so many years, he knew very well just how exquisitely you had lost the American girl her reputation!"

"Nonsense!" cried her brother. "American girls—*les demi-vierges*—have no reputation to lose, as our carefully guarded and innocent-minded French girls have."

"True. Nevertheless, being seen alone with *you* would not improve even an American girl's reputation!"

"Naughty!" laughed her brother. "What a gift you possess for cheering one! I have not smiled for four days."

The servant entered to say that madame his mother would pay a visit in a quarter of an hour to the sick-room.

"Remain just outside the door, Eugénie, I beg!" cried the young man, trembling. "My mother can be terrible when she likes."

"I will! But be very gentle with her. Remember that she suffers a thousand deaths daily over the loss of the tapestries. She loved them like children."

His sister gave a few hurried touches to the room, straightened the bedclothes, smoothed his pillows, and then left him.

Presently the door opened and his mother appeared. She held a lighted candle in her hand, which so trembled with agitation that the flame flickered. All her affectations of speech and manner were gone. She had for-

gotten her guttural English voice. She had forgotten that she had hunted. She had forgotten her youth.

She advanced to the foot of the bed, and stood there looking at her son in perfect silence. But her terrible white face spoke with eloquence. All the sins and follies of his wasted career crowded upon the young man's mental vision as he lay there arraigned before the silent tribunal of his mother's eyes. Her bristling white eyebrows twitched nervously, her breast heaved, but still she said nothing. Her steady gaze was so full of intensest accusation that his own mind followed hers. He remembered his follies one by one. He shrank from the disdain which lowered her eyelids when she recalled the part the despised Americans had played in their more recent troubles. Her eyes fell for a moment pityingly on his bandaged hands, and he took hope. But in an instant her mind flew to his last offence, and the fire leaped from her eyes until Raoul quailed.

The nervous man began to quiver from head to foot. The silence was something awful. Only the little clock ticked away beside his bed, counting off the minutes during which his mother stared at him in accusing silence. Then, with an awful dignity, she turned from him and walked towards the door, her garments creeping after her like the whispers of an enemy. The agony of the old Frenchwoman was visible in every movement. She turned at the door, and, holding the candle above her head, she bent one last terrible look upon her son's blanched face, and then left the room, still without speaking.

As the door closed the young man sat up in bed and screamed aloud from sheer nervousness. His sister came running in and flung herself upon her knees beside the bed.

"What is it, my poor boy? What did she say to you? Speak, I beg! Your pale face frightens me!"

"Say? She said nothing! Not one word! Just stared at me like the accusing dead. *Mon Dieu!* If the horrible silence had lasted one moment longer I should have fainted from fear. She can be the most terrible person in the world when she likes!"

"Poor Raoul!"

"I would not have objected to a torrent of reproaches —I was prepared for them! But her eyes! They will follow me forever!"

"Probably she knew that," said her daughter. "She has tried words with you before."

The door opened and the butler put his head in.

"Madame la Comtesse," he said, "the little shrivelled-up woman is here again, and would like to see M. le Marquis."

"The little shrivelled-up woman!" repeated the comtesse. There is no exact translation for the word "*ratatinée*," by which servants always described Maria.

"The American!" said the butler, as if he tasted something nauseous. So well do servants keep the trend of affairs.

"Maria!" exclaimed the comtesse, looking at her brother. "What can she wish to see you for now?"

"Heaven knows!" said Raoul, irritably.

"Shall we let her in? She might help to take your mind from disagreeable scenes, and you can turn her out if she becomes annoying."

"Very well."

The comtesse went out, and Raoul received Maria alone. She came in gasping with excitement. Something gave the Frenchman courage to believe that all was not yet lost. He smiled faintly, sadly, and said:

"My love!"

With a sob she sank at his bedside.

"Oh, Raoul! Raoul!" she wailed.

"Why do you weep, little one?"

"It is because of the hatred I have for my sister and the love I have for you!"

"But it is not well to hate one's sister, mousey," said the marquis, gently.

"Oh, how good, how forgiving you are! My angel!" cried the woman, hysterically.

The Frenchman raised his bandaged hand to lay upon her head, but she shrank back.

"No, no!" she cried; "you will injure yourself! Oh, your beautiful hands!"

"Alas, yes! All my claims to a woman's love are gone. I no longer have the right to love you, or to ask your love in return."

Maria raised her swollen face.

"You speak of love to me, after all that has happened?"

"Did you think it was your vulgar money I loved, little one? You, with your daintiness and your charm?"

"Oh! oh!" cried Maria, choking. "I *told* them so! I *said* you loved me and not the money!"

"It was your father's insulting manner, my love. I could not brook his insolence. He is very vulgar, if you will allow me to speak so rudely."

"He is hopelessly American," said his daughter.

"He assured me that he would never give you a sou for a dowry. But did you never know that you are rich in your own right, my jewel? The 'Lonely Mollie' mine is not your father's. It is yours. Your mother left you a half-interest in it. Has he concealed this knowledge from you, my poor child?"

Maria's little green eyes sent forth jets of flame as she pulled herself away from the bed, clutching at the bedclothes, her mouth open, her thin chest heaving.

The Frenchman was hazarding a shrewd guess. He wished Maria to go home and tax her father with this as if she knew it for an established fact.

"Is that true?" she whispered. "Have I a penny in my own right, apart from him—apart from—*her?*"

"My darling, you are the only one of all the three children who has a fortune. Yours came from your lovely mother."

"Oh! oh!" shrieked Maria. "You are the only one who ever spoke so sweetly of my mother. My father never mentions her—I do not know why. Rose always harps on hers, and my father permits it without reproof. But you—oh, what exquisite sentiment the French have! How well you must have known that it would touch my heart for you to recognize and love her!"

The Frenchman's mouth twitched as he looked at the American's bowed head and heaving shoulders.

"Ah, my little one, alas! that I can only mention your dear mother to you as a friend! Alas! that since I am crippled I no longer have the hope of calling you my wife, and of thinking of her blessing sent down upon us from heaven!"

"But why?" demanded Maria, clutching with her little claws at the bedclothes, as a cat drags up the carpet. "*Why*, if I am rich in my own right—if the *dot* is enough to satisfy you—why can I not defy him and marry you, since you love me for myself alone? Why? Why?"

"Ah, my child! If he has never told you of your enormous wealth, perhaps he has put it out of your reach. Perhaps he has given it to *Rose*."

Maria shrieked and shook the bedclothes savagely.

"Never!" she cried. "I will kill her if he has done such a thing!"

"Gently, gently, my love! You will make me worse if you excite me. Go now, if you love me. Make sure if the money is yours, and come to-morrow to see me again!"

"May I come to-morrow? You are sure you wish to see me?"

"Ah! are *you* sure you are willing to marry a man with maimed hands—a cripple?"

Maria clutched at her starched collar until it unbuttoned.

"Am I sure? Am I sure?" she stuttered.

"There, there, mouse! Go! I am exhausted by your vehemence."

Maria gave him one long, passionate, adoring look and stumbled towards the door. Then she turned back, and, bending over him, she whispered:

"You are sure, *sure* you will marry me if the 'Lonely Mollie' is mine?"

"Ah, darling, that is for you to say! You will be a rich woman! I a cripple! Will *you* then marry me?"

Maria sobbed hysterically and ran from the room gasping for breath.

Mr. Hollenden and Rose were in the library of the new house reading. Shirley was comfortably, but unwillingly, installed in an *atelier* in the Latin quarter, leaving his father and sisters alone. The shaded lamps cast a soft red glow through the handsome room, and there was no sound except the crackling of Mr. Hollenden's paper, when, with a frightful bang, the door flew open and Maria burst into the room, the foam upon her blue lips showing her to be in one of her terrible furies.

Rose, thinking, not without reason, that Maria's fury was to be directed against her, hurried towards the door, but her sister's first words arrested her.

"Father!" cried Maria. "Who owns the 'Lonely Mollie' mine? You or I?"

Rose expected to see her father turn upon Maria and quell her with a sentence, as she had seen him do before. But, instead, to her surprise, she saw the paper tremble in his hands as he laid it across his knees and took off his glasses.

"Who has been talking nonsense to you?" he said, roughly.

"It is not nonsense!" cried Maria, gathering courage from his manner. "I know that it is true. I only want to hear it from your own lips. Remember! I *know!*"

"Ah!" said Mr. Hollenden, "you have been talking to my lawyers. They are the only living persons, as far as I know, who could have told you. You are a clever woman, Maria! I congratulate you!"

"Then you admit it!" cried his daughter, eagerly, coming closer to him and leaning on the back of a chair. "The 'Lonely Mollie' is mine?"

"Half of it is yours. You and I together own a controlling interest. When the mine began to pan out, I wired instantly for a small block of the stock, just in order to control it. I paid half a million dollars for what I own. I only paid five hundred dollars for all that you own. You inherit it from your mother."

"How much is my share worth?" demanded Maria, her little green eyes snapping with greed.

"Do you want to sell?"

"Perhaps. How much will you give?"

"I will write you my check to-night for seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars for your half-interest in the 'Lonely Mollie' mine," said her father, laying his finger-tips together and surveying her shrewdly.

"Then it is worth at least two millions, and I won't sell!" cried his daughter, triumphantly.

"Twenty years of Europe has not taken *quite* all the American out of you, Maria!"

"Ah, ha! I know that you are said never to pay full value for anything, nor to sell except at the highest."

Mr. Hollenden took up his paper again.

"I shall dismiss those lawyers to-morrow," he said.

"You needn't!" cried Maria, casting herself into a chair and clasping her knee. "I haven't been near

them. The Marquis d'Auteuil told me. He learned of it in Denver."

"In Denver!" exclaimed Mr. Hollenden. "Was that Frenchman on my trail as far back as that?"

"The baronne says that he went solely for the purpose of verifying the reports of your wealth," said Rose, quietly.

Maria made a dive for her sister, but her father's voice arrested her.

"Sit down!" he thundered. "Now tell me what you intend to do?"

"I intend to marry the Marquis d'Auteuil!" cried Maria.

"How do you know that he will marry you on so little, compared to what he expected to get out of me?"

"He said so!"

"When?"

"Just now!"

"You have been to see him? You went to call upon a man, alone, at this time of night?"

"I took my maid!"

"Disgraceful!" said her father, reddening.

"It is a continental custom," said Maria, contemptuously. "It may not be done in the States, but it is perfectly proper here. If you knew more about society, you would not make yourself so absurd with your American prudery."

Mr. Hollenden sprang from his chair and began to pace the floor with his hands clenched angrily in his pockets. Maria's insolence was becoming unbearable.

"How like your mother you are, Maria!" he said.

"That must be a compliment, for the Marquis d'Auteuil referred to her to-night as my 'lovely mother,'" retorted Maria.

"Your mother, my dear Maria, was my cook."

"*What?*" cried Rose, crimsoning.

"Your cook!" gasped Maria.

"And I told the marquis so when he came to ask for you," pursued her father, pitilessly.

Maria was too furious to speak. She sat choking.

"What did he say?" asked Rose, breathlessly.

"He said it made no difference! Beautiful of him, wasn't it?"

"Ah! I *told* you he loved me!" cried Maria.

"You poor little fool! The first time after your marriage that he hurls the fact at you in one of his fits of anger, think of me!"

"I don't care! Let him!"

"You are determined to marry him, after everybody has warned you—after all that I have said?"

"*Nothing* shall prevent me!" cried Maria, springing to her feet and walking up and down excitedly.

Rose slipped out of the room without speaking. Mr. Hollenden watched Maria's curious gait until he could stand it no longer.

"Go to bed!" he cried, suddenly.

As the door closed behind her the American stood with his hands in his pockets surveying the pattern of the rug under his feet.

"She has beaten me, in spite of all my efforts. Beaten me by a trick, just as her mother used to do. That frog-eating Frenchman never knew a thing positively. He simply put the idea into her head. She is a little devil—that Maria. But at least she will be the Marquise d'Auteuil, and that's something!"

CHAPTER XXI

ROSE'S one consolation, during the tempestuous weeks which followed her sister's engagement to the marquis, was that Marion Gregory and Lida Schermerhorn would soon return from Austria. They intended to spend the winter in Paris, and Rose had secured an apartment for them. The Comtesse de Brissy made a fruitless effort to induce Rose to take one of hers, and Mr. Hollenden offered them Maria's *entresol*, rent free, but Rose shrank with loathing from any more intercourse with the family d'Auteuil.

In this she was admirably backed up by Shirley.

"Don't you do it, Rose! Get an apartment about two thousand miles from all of them, where you and I can go without hearing the sound of their confounded names. Get an unfurnished one, and let's furnish it ourselves to please the girls. I know just how Lida would want her rooms done."

"All right, dear. That will be lovely. It will take my mind off my troubles."

"I wouldn't fret so, old girl, over Maria. She's got what she wants. And she's behaving herself, for the first time in her life. The comtesse throws her hooks into her when she doesn't."

"Shirley," said Rose, "did it ever occur to you that the comtesse has her eye on father?"

"Great Scott, no!"

"Well, think a minute. You don't believe for an instant, do you, that Maria's influence over father is

sufficient to keep you studying art when you despise it so? The comtesse is back of it. She knows you and I stand together and she wants to separate us."

"Does she come here often?"

"Every day. She is selecting Maria's *trousseau*."

"She gets a commission on every rag Maria buys, did you know that?"

"No! Who told you?"

"I was in a shop and overheard her. She did not see me."

"I'm getting hardened to such things. I don't seem to mind them any more. But it's another matter if such a woman as that is to come into the family."

"To try to rule us!" said Shirley.

"To take our mother's place," said Rose, softly. "Had you thought of that?"

Shirley got up and shook himself.

"She would be a nasty one to have around under foot all the time, wouldn't she? So *she* is keeping me at sign-painting, is she?—when I ought to be at home, trying for an appointment in the army! Do you know, I believe we are going to have *war?* There's a lot of hot war-talk in the papers lately. Of course we'll all go home if there is."

"Of course. But I'm afraid that we'll stay a long time in Paris if we wait for war to take us home."

"The French would side with Spain," said Shirley. "I have noticed lately several signs, '*Se habla Español*,' put on smart shop-windows under 'English spoken here.'"

"Why don't you begin Spanish? If we have war it would stand you in good stead."

"I'll do it," said Shirley. "That's a good idea, Rosie-posie. Now come along, and I'll take you for a whirl in my automobile. It gives Peter something to do to keep up with us."

The apartment was taken and furnished. They only permitted a firm to do one room. They even had Maple over from London for the dining-room. This was before he had his place in Paris. So that when the apartment was finished it was perfection.

"What's the name of those sweets Townshend is always sending you, Rose?" asked Shirley. "I want to order some for Lida, to have them here when she arrives."

"*Marrons déguisés*, and you get them very well made at Siraudin's, in the Place de l'Opéra."

The day finally came when they arrived. Shirley and Rose went to meet them, and Rose brought them home in triumph, while Shirley stayed to get their luggage through the custom-house. Shirley remained to dinner, and smoked through the evening, and then went off, rather more blithely than usual, to his studio in the rue Bonaparte. Rose had arranged to stay all night.

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Lida, going to the window and looking down into the brilliant street. "Back again in old, crackling Paris! How I hate the way the drivers crack their whips! How I hate the way the newsboys always run with their papers! Why don't they walk? Anybody would think they were going to a fire! I always want to get up and trot with them and say, 'Where's the fire, boy?' All night long they run and cry out, '*De la Pray-sse!*' '*De la Pray-sse!*' And here come the carrot and turnip carts—a long string of them from the Porte Maillot, with the drivers walking beside them in their blue blouses, and those be-yewtiful great big Norman horses, with those fur tails hanging in their poor eyes. And here go thousands of cabs! Oh, Paris is a dream, in spite of all its seamy side! Have you had any experiences, Rose?"

"Yes, a few. I was walking in the Allée des Acacias the other day with the baronne, and the carriage

was following us, when a Frenchman hopped up to me and said, '*Ma mignonne!*' Imagine *my* being his '*mignonne,*' when I was twice his size! The baronne seldom loses her temper, but she appealed to a gendarme and asked if two ladies must be subjected to such insults, and the gendarme said yes, if they were on foot; that ladies' safeguard in Paris was always to drive. The baronne was for signalling the victoria, but instead I called Peter, and as he came tearing along I said to the gendarme, 'I think that you mistake yourself. We shall walk.' And he said, 'But yes, mademoiselle. You have reason. You may walk, and no one will speak to you. *Mon Dieu!* What an animal!'"

"How lovely!" said Marion. "I wonder what Peter will do when he sees my toy dog. Will he eat him?"

"Oh no! He will be very good if I tell him to. But really, Marion, this is the tiniest dog I ever saw. What's this name on his collar? I can't read it."

"Lida named him. We call him the 'United States Army,' because there is so little of him"

Rose colored.

"I don't like that," she said.

"Oh, you lovely, big, loyal thing!" cried Lida, crouching at Rose's feet and embracing her knees. "Can't you see the fun of the thing? You would if you'd seen the Austrian and the German armies, as we have. When we were at Ischl, the Austrian Emperor, Francis Joseph, heard of the dog, and of how he was named, and he asked to see him, so we lent him to one of the officers in his suite, and 'U. S. Army' was taken to the *Residenz*, and Captain von Hartmann said His Majesty laughed heartily. Wasn't that funny? I thought that spoke rather well for my little American joke."

"It did, only I would not ridicule our army even for the approval of an emperor," said Rose.

"Lida liked the Austrians very much," said Marion.

"I had a dreadful time keeping her in order. She had a regular little court of officers around her all the time, from those in His Majesty's suite at Ischl down to little second lieutenants in Vienna."

"Poor Shirley!" said Rose.

"Oh, but there wasn't one among them all who could com*pare* with Shirley!" cried Lida. "It's sacrilege—it's irreligious to say such a thing, Rose!"

"Shirley was the happiest thing while we were furnishing this apartment. I suppose it was all on your account, Marion!"

"Of course, I suppose so, dear. But I must say that we appreciate it. Oh, how thankful I am for such love as you are able to give, Rose! You would be rich if you hadn't a penny to your blessed flower name, my girl!"

"Rose is the only girl I ever saw who knew how to give to the undeserving poor in a way which didn't wound their pride. I take things from her that I'd knock anybody else in the head for daring to offer me."

"And yet," said Rose, quickly, "it is just because Shirley is the son of a rich man that you won't marry him."

"How dare you, Rose!" cried Lida, crimsoning.

"Oh, I dare to say anything!"

"Nonsense! How is Mr. Townshend?"

"I don't know. He has gone to the North Cape in his yacht."

"Haven't you seen him since the duel?" asked Marion.

"No. He wrote to say good-bye."

"Oh, Lord!" cried Lida, jumping up and flinging her arms above her head. "I think that man is the grandest hero I ever heard of! Think of the thing! Think how stupid and ordinary it would have been to kill the marquis! Think of the exquisiteness of his aim and the everlastingness of his revenge! Not a day will pass but that the marquis will look at his ruined hands

and remember how he got them! Will he fool with an innocent American girl again? Well, I think not! Oh! oh! Every day I give at least one squeal of delight to think of the two little pop! pops! of an American pistol at Chalons, and of how blissfully a French finger fell at each shot! Just so that he couldn't fight his other duels! Oh, Shirley wrote us about it, and I nearly burst with heavenly joy!"

"What a precious fool I was!" said Rose, crimsoning with shame. "I had been told a dozen times. I knew better. I simply forgot."

"We all know but we all forget," answered Lida. "How can an American girl be supposed to remember?"

"Have you suffered very much from it, Rose?"

"I suppose so. I have suffered from something. Of course we are visited and invited. The Duchesse de Briancourt has attended to that. But the French don't like me. They don't like *any* Americans. They only fawn and flatter because we are rich and they hope to get something out of us."

"Have you had any proposals yet, Rose?"

"Oh yes!" said Rose, cheerfully. "Father refuses a Frenchman every week. Once I had no offer and he said Hollenden stock had greatly depreciated in value. Then the market took a jump and the next week I had three. He went about rubbing his hands and saying that the price of live stock had risen."

"Delicious!" said Marion.

"Have you got so that you can stand the men-servants coming into your bedroom while you are in bed, Rose?"

"Pretty well. I find now that I don't always stop to think about it."

"I have always thought that person very clever who said 'Humanity is divided into three genders—men, women, and waiters!'" said Marion.

" I think my sense of propriety is geographical," said Lida. " In America, if a man-servant came into my bedroom I should scream and put my head under the bedclothes. But as I travel eastward, I begin to do better. In England the waiter brings my breakfast and my letters, and I keep the curtains drawn until after he goes, when I ring for the chambermaid to draw them. There seems to be something so very bald about allowing any unnecessary conversation with a man who speaks English, when one is in bed ! But in Paris the waiter draws the curtains and asks me—in French !—if I have well slept, and I answer with becoming affability. But as I go farther east—mark well the downfall of my American prudery ! Once, in Egypt, an Egyptian Bey used to send me flowers every morning before I was up, and the florist himself, the proprietor, used to bring them. The first time I thought it was the waiter and shrieked '*Entrez*,' when in bounced this gorgeous creature, having an immense bridal bouquet done up in silver paper, which he presented with a most elaborate speech. My first thought was, I regret to say, not of the impropriety of having a strange shopkeeper in my bedroom, but of the horrible fact that my nightgown cost only eighty-nine cents !"

" Oh, you goose !" cried Rose. " Lida, I do think you are the most ridiculous thing I ever knew."

Lida got up and began to walk about the apartment. Rose watched her a moment and then said :

" Didn't you bring me anything, Lida ?"

Lida's face crimsoned with pleasure.

" Yes, I did !" she said, diving at a trunk and sinking on her knees in front of it.

" Oh, what is it ? Hurry up, can't you ? I do love presents !"

Marion Gregory's soft eyes seemed to shed a benediction on Rose's head as she listened.

" How well she knows how to make each of us happy !" she thought.

" I brought you this hat," said Lida, tearing off the tissue-paper in which it was packed and displaying it, " and it has a history. One night I dreamed I saw you in a hat just like this—put it on first and let's see."

" But it's so queer," said Rose. " Which is the front of it ?"

" Here, let me do it. Sit down. No, that's the back. Now this feather goes there, and is caught to the hair loosely, like this ! Now hold still and let me look at you. Oh, Gor' ! Marion, isn't she stunning in it ? Here, take this hand-glass, Rose. You look simply ripping !"

" It's the heavenliest thing I ever saw !" said Rose. " I never could have thought it out for myself. Oh, Lida, what a boon you are to us !"

" There, Marion, you doubted my wisdom ! Are you prepared to declare that I am infallible from henceforth and forever ?"

" Yes, Lida. I own myself beaten," said Marion.

" Go on with your dream, Lida," said Rose. " I never saw such ostrich-feathers !"

" And never will again," said Lida, complacently. " I got them in Vienna. But to begin at the beginning. I dreamed that I saw you in this very hat, and that every one who saw you turned to look at you, and commented on the width and softness of your ostrich-plumes. For two or three days the picture stayed in my mind, and one day I pounced on poor Marion and told her that I was on the trail. She hadn't any idea what I meant, but we got into a cab and went into an unfamiliar part of the city, where there is the most wonderful dealer in feathers of every sort and description. It was a wholesale house, but, being in trade myself, I have a right to go to all such shops. You never saw such a place ! There were fans made out of the tiny red feathers, only

a dozen of which grow on the neck of a humming-bird! He was a marvel, that old Austrian! I asked to see his crude ostrich-feathers, and he spread several hundred on a table before the window. While Marion selected fans and boas I was bending all my energies on these feathers. Finally I took twelve, and asked what it would cost to wash, curl, and make up these plumes, putting three into one, to make them heavy and billowy. I wish you could have seen that nice old man's face as he sorted them. He clasped them to his waistcoat and cried out, 'You have stolen the heart out of my breast! These are my most perfect feathers. There is not a flaw in one of them! Wasn't he lovely, Marion? Well, then, he made these exquisite things, and I made the hat for you myself. Oh, Rose, my darling, there is so little that I can do for you in return for all you do for me! I can't begin to be thankful enough that, in spite of your beauty, you are a perfect fool about buying hats!"

The girl's eyes were wet, and Rose, between laughter and tears, gathered her little thin form into her long arms and hugged her until the precious hat fell on the floor.

"Oh, my word, Rose! Sentiment and hysterics are all very well, but that hat is sacred! Pick it up, Marion, and I'll put it away in pink cotton before I go to bed. Good-night, my two treasures. Don't stay up until morning, for there are heaps of days coming, and I'll give you no end of chances to talk about me behind my back!"

As the door closed behind her, Rose held out her arms to Marion, and the tall, self-contained woman let herself be folded to Rose's heart like a tired child. They said nothing for a moment. There are times when women are most eloquent in perfect silence. Marion's wounded soul needed the warm comfort of a woman's arms, and there were not even tears in her eyes when she withdrew herself. Tears are for light sorrows and for happiness. Marion Gregory's burden was one beyond their reach.

"Tell me," said Rose, simply.

"It is an experiment," said Marion. "A desperate last expedient, which may fail and land me in utter ruin and despair, but something had to be done. Oscar was almost insane when Lena kept her word to you and went back to her father. She is of Swiss descent, and did marvellous embroidery, which she sent to me, and I sold it for her at fancy prices. I bought a good deal of it myself, and I saw to it that she had all the money she wanted, partly because I wanted to keep her straight and contented, and partly in self-defence. I didn't want poverty to be her excuse for yielding to his entreaties. He even went down to see her twice, but the brave little thing resisted him once, and the second time she left town in order to avoid him. There is much of good in the little creature, and, strange as it may seem, I am genuinely fond of her. She has exactly the face and figure I would have if I could have made myself, and my wisdom must have been intuitive, because she captivated the man out of all the world whom I would fascinate in that same way if I could."

Rose leaned forward and caressed Marion's long, slender hands, which lay folded in her lap.

"Then she wanted to get away from that small town and study to be a trained nurse, so I have put her into a training-school in New York, in which I am interested, and she is doing well. She and I seem to understand each other. She is restless and ambitious, and her embroidery only occupied her hands, leaving her heart and brain idle and hungry. I think she was afraid of herself. But she is keeping her word, which she gave to you that night. You completely won her, Rose. She almost worships you."

"Me? Why, Marion, dear, I've done nothing for her compared to all that you have!"

"No, Rose. You are her idol. Of course she is grate-

ful to me, but no one enjoys prolonged gratitude. Like condescension, it is too one-sided to be pleasant. But she *loves* you."

"And Oscar?"

Marion's face grew drawn and gray around the mouth.

"Oscar is a gentleman, and he has all a gentleman's courtesy and horror of wounding one. He never intended to be unkind to me, but his anguish over Lena was hard to watch. He stayed away from me a great deal, although I did my miserable best to be attractive to him. I wore gowns that I thought he would like, and he never saw them. I would offer to sing to him, and he always had a headache. Sometimes he would kiss me and ask if he neglected me, and I always said no. Of course he was neglecting me, but I never whined nor allowed him to see that I suspected that anything was wrong. He was suffering so cruelly that I often longed to tell him that I knew and that we would bear it together, but I didn't dare. I am a perfect coward where Oscar is concerned. Of course, he was so nervous, he often said impatient things to me, and when I overlooked them I could see that he felt grateful to me. But it wasn't *love*, Rose! I bore it as long as I could. I saw even his forbearance slipping away from me day by day. My presence was a constant reproach to him, and so I decided to come over here for a year. It was a desperate thing to do. Sometimes I wonder that I dared, but I am borne up by the knowledge that he is a strong, great-souled man. I had his love once. It was a glorious experience, and one never to be forgotten. He made me perfectly happy. Even now I believe that that same love is there, deep down in his heart, only temporarily covered, and that some day he will discover that I am the wife he still loves. Until then, I can wait."

CHAPTER XXII

MARIA was aggressively triumphant in her engagement, but Mr. Hollenden, having acknowledged her clever trickery to himself, resolved to turn defeat into a victory, and for that reason maintained a silence which Maria thought sullen, and rejoiced accordingly. Her father was never silent unless beaten. *She* had beaten him! She baited him with all the taunts Raoul's vindictive brain could suggest, but, with a patience that made even Rose suspicious, he mutely declined to reply. When Rose told Shirley, he whistled softly, and then roundly denounced Maria as the cause of his being kept at "sign-painting" and missing all the excitement.

"Keep your eyes open, Rose, and watch the game for all you're worth. Father has some card up his sleeve, you may be sure. How does the comtesse treat Maria? Has she received her into the family, as Maria fondly hoped?"

"I think I should define Maria's position as a sort of upper-servant. She carries the dogs to and from the carriage—*our* carriage!—and whenever the comtesse is tired she permits Maria to give her a sort of massage, which the comtesse has succeeded in teaching to only one maid, and that maid left her. I went in one day and found Maria kneeling by Madame de Brissy's couch, brushing her hair and giving her this curious, soft massage, which is done with only the tips of the fingers. It would drive *me* wild, but it seemed to bring a sort of

intoxicating ecstasy to the comtesse. The French temperament is peculiar."

"How disgusting!" said Shirley. "Here, Maria would let you die in your tracks before she would smooth a pillow for you; but, just to get a foothold in a house which secretly despises her, she turns herself into a cross between a hostler and a footman, and actually performs menial services for those cads. Rose, what do you think of the Parisians?"

Rose laughed.

"What do *you?*"

"I think the same, and many of 'em!"

"But I think worse of Maria for permitting herself to be so used."

"Pooh, my dear! Maria is only doing what hundreds of other Americans are doing for the titled rottenness of Europe. I have seen more of my countrywomen make door-mats of themselves on this side than any sane man would believe possible. And what idiots they are into the bargain! Can't they see that they are despised for it? Why don't they bully these foreigners a little, just to make themselves respected? Look here, Rose. They must see it, and just swallow it for the sake of the rumors which get to America of their glory. They aren't fools, really. They just pretend to be, and don't they give a good imitation of it? You and I, Rose, with all due respect to our natural conceit, are neither brilliant nor clever. We belong to the common or garden variety of human beings. Yet, on my word, I feel like a Mr. Darwin when I see things as they are, when all my life I've heard just the opposite in America!"

"Well, remember, for one thing, Shirley, that whatever father's plans were, you and I did not come over here with any social aspirations. We were dragged over almost by the hair of our heads by Maria, and Maria dominates us all. We must allow her to, or fight.

And we came over here with no pride for ourselves, but an overmastering pride for our country and the flag, and *that's* why we see things as they *are !*"

Shirley walked to the window.

" Where's father ?" he asked.

" Gone down to Munroe's. He said he would be back at twelve. What are you working at, Shirley ?"

Shirley turned half-way round and leaned against the casement.

" My dear, I'm having the time of my life. After that article in the *Matin,* Monday, I rounded up all the American students I could get hold of, and a few of the other fellows from the club, and I read the thing to them—all sneers at America and cheers for Spain, and I found that about eight out of every ten agreed with me that we are going to have war with Spain. So I organized a company and equipped it, and I'm drilling 'em to ' beat the band.' "

" Oh, Shirley, how glorious ! Are the boys enthusiastic ?"

" Wild ! They drill until they are ready to drop. Want to come over and see 'em ?"

" Well, *rather !* I'll present the company with a flag."

" They would be delighted. I wish you would come and teach us the ' first aid to the wounded.' You've had so much more of army life than I."

" I will, and I'll teach them to cook. There are over thirty ways of preparing hard-tack. Have you got any ?"

" It's ordered. What's the bugle-call for ' mess '? Whistle it."

Rose whistled and then played it. But Shirley interrupted her.

" Here comes Maria, and I can tell by the way she hops along that she is in a tantrum. I wish we had a

cyclone-cellar in this hôtel. I'd spend the next hour there in comparative tranquillity."

"Stay to breakfast, Shirley, do! Father won't speak to her, so I get more than my share."

"They make you the buffer, do they? Well, fly with me into the billiard-room and we'll lock the door. *I* don't care to meet the little darling myself until I am protected by my parent."

It was a curious breakfast-party. Rose and Shirley did not appear until the butler came the second time to say that monsieur was growing impatient.

"That means that he is already in the breakfast-room. Rose, you go ahead, and I'll get behind you. You face death every day, and I'm not used to the firing-line."

But Maria was not there.

"How are you, Shirley?" said his father. "I heard Rose laugh and I knew you must be in the house. Sit down."

"Aren't we to wait for the marquise?" asked Shirley, in a hoarse whisper.

Mr. Hollenden's grim face relaxed. They all raised their heads expectantly as Maria's heels clicked into the room.

"Good-morning, Maria!" said Shirley.

"How came you here? Father, why isn't Shirley at work? I saw Julian this morning and he said Shirley had not been at the studio for four days."

"I'm working out a little thing at home," said Shirley, meekly. "It is my own original idea—the first one I've had in Paris, and all the other chaps are wild about it. They say it has more dash and go in it than anything they ever did."

"That's a very good thing," said Maria, much mollified. "That is the first sign of enthusiasm over art that you have displayed."

Shirley stole a glance at Rose's twitching lips.

"Try some of these steamed *moules*, Shirley. You will find them excellent."

Maria sat nervously breaking off bits of her crisp bread and gnawing it, glancing uneasily at her father, who never turned his eyes in her direction. Something had occurred to make Mr. Hollenden unusually expansive. Maria made conversation with Shirley with so much affability that the butler and the first footman retired to the corridor between courses to discuss it.

"It is not for long—such amiability," said Louis, the butler. "I feel a storm in the air. Believe me, it will burst before the repast is finished. Watch the eyes of monsieur. They glitter, and he continues to laugh silently, as he did last night at dinner."

"When is the wedding to come off, Maria?" asked Shirley. Maria bridled and clutched at the table-cloth.

"It is set for the fifteenth of this month—two weeks from to-day," said Maria, proudly. "My clothes are all finished, and our passage engaged to America. We are to sail on *La Gascogne* and return on *La Bourgogne*."

"America!" exclaimed Shirley. "What are you going there for?"

Even Mr. Hollenden glanced in her direction. Maria saw it and smiled maliciously.

"We are going to prove my claim to the 'Lonely Mollie,' and perhaps to sell. Raoul has told me of the immense boom in mining stocks, which my father carefully concealed from me, and we think it advisable to sell while we can. There is no telling when the ore will give out."

There was a short silence after this. Then Shirley said:

"How about the marriage settlements? Do you want me to help you about them?"

"Your offer of help comes a little late," said Maria,

rudely. "I have consulted neither of you, but have signed them myself."

"I suppose you have a perfect right to, but I hope you haven't given them too much."

"'Them'! 'them'!" cried Maria. "I have only settled money on Raoul! Whom do you mean by 'them'?"

"I mean that the whole family d'Auteuil will be upon you for money, and that you must protect yourself if you don't want to die a pauper!" said Shirley, stoutly.

"There you are mistaken!" cried Maria, triumphantly. "I have only given the comtesse her commission for arranging the marriage, and I am not going to give the marquise anything. Raoul suggested that it would be much more delicate to make her a present of these tapestries, so I have sent my lawyers to negotiate for them, and they are to bring me an answer to-day. I dare say father will miss them!"

"But they are leased to us!" cried Rose. "Our lease runs six years!"

"Ah-h!-but there is a clause in the lease which permits selling, and, if I have to buy the whole hôtel, I shall secure those tapestries for Vrianault. I have promised them to restore it. I told you this when I was first engaged."

The butler entered with a note upon a tray, and handed it to Maria.

"It is from my lawyers!" announced Maria, with importance. Mr. Hollenden leaned back and tapped his waistcoat with his eye-glasses. Out of the corner of his pale eyes he saw Maria crumple the letter in her hand and dig her nails into the table-cloth. The others sat, apprehensively, waiting.

"Shirley," said his father, negligently, "last week I met that skunk d'Auteuil in the Champs Elysées, and he said, 'Good-morning, my dear papa-in-law! I have

not had the pleasure to see you since our last memorable interview, when I asked for your daughter's hand!' He will be an amiable addition to the family, won't he?"

"So that is why you have bought this hôtel!" cried Maria. "To keep the tapestries from their rightful owners! This note from my lawyers says that you bought it last week. I suppose you bought it that very day!"

"One doesn't buy houses in a day, my dear," said her father. "I began negotiations that day, if you like. I am very much pleased with the tapestries myself."

"This may break off my marriage," said Maria, hoarsely. She controlled herself with difficulty. Her head swam. She forgot that she was betraying herself to her family. "It was one of the conditions they imposed —that I should give back these tapestries that they love better than anything in all the world Oh, father, sell them to me! Give them to me as my only share in all your money! You might just as well kill me as to refuse me! I tell you my marriage depends upon it!"

Her father turned and looked at her—a pitiful, shrunken figure, the face so distorted between rage and fear that it would have revolted the most casual observer. He turned from her to Rose.

"Look at your sister!" thundered Mr. Hollenden, "and remember what that man sneaked in and did in our absence! Tried to ruin her in the eyes of all Paris! Oh, I know! I've heard enough of it from our friends! All the family resent it except you! But you—you are going to *marry* him! Actually marry him! It makes me sick."

"But, father, I love him! Have you forgotten that?"

Mr. Hollenden gave her a steely glance from under his white eyebrows and shouted with mirthless laughter

"You love him!" he cried. Well, *so do I!* I love him so well that I am going to keep the tapestries!"

CHAPTER XXIII

AFTER Maria's stormy and hysterical visit to the comtesse, in which she shrieked out the story, in Raoul's hearing, of her father's purchase of their hôtel, the Frenchwoman shut her up and bundled her out of the house with such scant courtesy that Raoul was sure his sister had some fresh plan in mind. As Maria was leaving, she hesitated, longing to ask if the marquis intended to marry her or not. But the glittering politeness of the Frenchman and the stony front of his sister forbade such impertinence from the American.

D'Auteuil saw Maria to her carriage with that sleek surface smoothness which she always viciously compared to the more honest courtesy of Shirley and Townshend. To be quite accurate, it was this single characteristic of the Frenchman, this ineffaceable souvenir of the courtier race of the world, transmitted inexorably with the accompanying insincerity of the habitual flatterer, which captivated the meagre soul of the ambitious little American, whose early recollections savored of the sickening equality and familiarities of Western mining and lumber camps. The Frenchman is always a disciple of the psychic, and this one in particular read Maria through and through. He knew that to kiss her hand in public would condone any amount of neglect in private.

When he returned to the salon his sister was covering the coals with ashes. The fire was only lighted on the entrance of a visitor, and was smothered on his departure.

"Come into the little salon," she said, shiveringly. "It is not so cold there."

"Well, Eugénie, what have you to propose?" asked Raoul, impatiently.

The comtesse slowly closed her eyes until she was regarding her brother through a narrow slit.

"Do you trust me, Raoul? Do you think me clever?"

"Yes, to both questions, with all my heart!"

"Will you follow my advice blindly and ask no questions concerning my plans?"

Her brother hesitated. Few men are clever enough to trust a serious issue to a woman's brain with such implicit confidence as *that!*

"You are the only woman in the world whom I *do* trust," he said, slowly weighing his words. "And even you I trust only because you have nothing to gain and nothing to lose!"

The woman's face paled a little.

"You trust me only for that reason? Does, then, all the devotion of my life count for nothing?"

"You have paid some of my debts, and for that I am grateful. But how long will it be after I am safely married to my she-monkey before you will be hounding me to repay you? Do you know that it will take two-thirds of everything she has in the world to rescue me from my present dilemmas? Can I then afford to give you *anything* if I am to live like a gentleman?"

"Have I asked you for a sou?" asked his sister, steadily. "Am I not your only friend? For shame, Raoul! My friendship for you in the past should purchase your confidence in my disinterestedness forever!"

"What would your friendship for me count if a new lover were to enter your life, whose interests combated mine? No, a thousand times, no! I trust *no* woman forever! I trust you *now!* Be thankful for that. It is more than I can say of any other—even of our mother."

"Hush, my brother! Remember your own sin in the matter and be gentle with our mother."

"I only remember that I did as any gentleman, any Frenchman of noble blood, would do!" cried Raoul, violently. "I sold the family heirlooms (which were partly mine, to begin with!) to pay a debt of honor to save a woman—one of your friends, by-the-way!—from her husband's discovery of her fault."

"Ah-h-h!" breathed the comtesse. "I have always been sure of it! It was well managed—that affair. You were both clever—very clever."

"And, quite apart from saving *her*," proceeded the Frenchman, growing expansive under sympathy, "he would have assassinated *me!* He is the sort of beast who would fire on an unarmed man if he had him *in flagrante delicto.* He is of low blood—that man! He has no honor."

The comtesse dropped her eyes. Sometimes she was almost afraid that Raoul would tell her too much.

"Tell me," she said, hastily reverting to the subject in hand, "is it true that there is this tremendous rise in American mining stocks and that Maria's mine leads it?"

"Absolutely; if the newspapers are to be relied upon."

"But they are not," said the Frenchwoman, decisively. "Listen to me, Raoul. You want ready money. Then follow out your plan of marrying her; go at once to New York and sell everything! Take advantage of the newspapers, instead of letting them take advantage of you. If her mine is not really so rich as they say, you will gain by the transaction. If it is, there is no telling how long it may last, and at least you will have made yourself safe. This is no time for you to take risks in order to be richer next year. You are in desperate straits *now*, and this American money must save you."

"And the tapestries?"

"What would you say if I told you that I have not even despaired of *them?* Perhaps I can get them into our possession through another channel!"

The Frenchman brought his brows together in deep thought for a moment, bending a quizzical glance upon his sister. Then he leaned forward and kissed her hand.

"You are the cleverest woman in the world, Eugénie! You have won my respect. I will do as you suggest. You are so rich in expedients that you can afford to be poor in pocket!"

The comtesse sprang up and embraced her brother.

"If I succeed in my plans I shall be rich in more than expedients, and I shall not be sorry, I can assure you of that."

"Then you will not call upon me for the debt I now owe you?"

"Never! I might even be your banker still!"

"Eugénie, you are adorable!"

"I am more than repaid, my brother! Go, now, and pay your daily visit to our mother, but say nothing about the tapestries. Believe me, she will not question you!"

The young man made a wry face. He dutifully paid a visit to his mother each day, holding an amiable monologue for a quarter of an hour, but the old Frenchwoman had never spoken to him since her return from Vrianault.

The Marquise d'Auteuil seldom left her room now, except to go to mass. With the loss of the tapestries it seemed as if the mainspring of her life had snapped. She neglected all her usual interests, and either sat with her *Book of the Hours* on her knees, staring at nothing, or pacing the floor, with her heavy, measured tread.

Of what avail had been all her efforts to pay Raoul's debts and keep an open scandal from their name? For what had she borne the shocking infidelities of her husband, except to win his forbearance for her love for

Vrianault, which in every fit of rage he threatened to sell? She had brought a handsome dowry; to her husband had descended Vrianault—not through entail, but through pride. For generations it had been the glory of every d'Auteuil to know that even the most casual mention of their name recalled to mind the famous tapestries of Vrianault. To secure them she had broken her own heart by her marriage, upheld through years of loveless life by pride in her family holdings. Now, in her anguish, she cried, "To what end?"

Then, after the first shock of learning the depth of her son's infamy, Eugénie had held out the hope that Maria would buy them back and restore the château. This, and this alone, reconciled her to the horror of a d'Auteuil marrying a pig-sticker—a *rastaquouère*—an American!

But now—now came the news that the tapestries were not only forever out of their reach, but that Raoul, the last of the d'Auteuils, had so far forgotten his duty to society and his debt to posterity as to persist in this infamous marriage.

It was solely, then, for money—to enrich Raoul, and perhaps Eugénie. She, she, their mother, was to obtain nothing from it. They had forgotten her. Oh, the disgrace of it! The disgrace of an American marriage, and the thrice infamous ignominy of no personal profit as the price of it! What was France coming to, when her sons polluted their blood in this manner and thus shamelessly ignored their debts of honor?

She shed no tears, this haughty old Frenchwoman, but she spat upon the ground whenever she thought of the Americans.

When an international marriage takes place between impoverished blue blood and capital, no one except the high contracting parties knows how uncertain both anxious families are as to whether the interesting event

will really occur as advertised, or whether the groom's wedding-day disclosures of diminished estates and increased debts can drag the settlements up to a satisfactory figure. Fortunately, Maria Hollenden, like many of her ambitious compatriots, was not sensitive. Maria had all the making of a female Napoleon in her thin little soul. She fixed her eyes steadfastly upon the goal of her desires, and not only was undismayed by the rebuffs she met with, but, like a fighting bull-dog, she was unaware of her injuries until she lay down in the darkness to brood over the situation and heal her smarts. She was really magnificent in her determination, was this sallow little American, and let those who withhold her just meed of respect, because she was bad-tempered and not beautiful, remember that it requires two conditions to persevere in most famous marriages—either total ignorance, or the courage and endurance of a soldier. Maria was not ignorant. She had lived a young lifetime—twenty-two years—on the continent of Europe. Therefore she was to be admired for her unfaltering courage.

She gave up her religion without so much as a squeak of remonstrance, joined the Catholic Church, promised in a sort of ecstasy to bring up her children in the Roman faith, and presented herself on her wedding morning in the famous vestry of St. Sulpice in a sort of trance.

There are moments when the great, throbbing, pulsing world forgets the past petty meannesses of a fellow-being, and lets itself drift into a warm human sympathy with his joy or sorrow. No criminal was ever put to death, from the spy who is shot to the murderer who is hanged, but that the readers of the evening papers had a temporary loss of memory for his crime, and felt a mist in the eyes for the life which had gone out in remorseless expiation.

So with Maria. The look of solemn, awe-struck joy

on her gray face, the purple flush which accentuated her high cheek-bones, the nervous tightening of her muscles under her sleek satin bodice, combined to drag upon the sympathies of the spectators. Even Rose and Shirley and the comtesse forgave her everything, and felt a sympathetic lump in the throat for her transcendent joy. Such an expression of reverence, of religious ecstasy, as the seer of a celestial vision, is sometimes seen in the face of a novice in the act of taking the veil or of an ascetic during the communion service. It was patent to all that Maria's marriage to her lover was a sacrament. Only this man she was marrying was wholly out of sympathy with her joy. As he met her look of rapt devotion, his gorge rose, a cold perspiration broke out around his mouth, and for a moment a deadly nausea held him in its power.

Maria had ordained the full nuptial mass with its impressive music and beautiful ceremonials. As he sat by her side during its slow performance, her bridegroom only got the upper hand of his nervous malady by refusing to look at her and by counting the fringe of the altar-cloth.

But it came to an end at last, and the bridal party retired into the vestry to sign their names and to receive congratulations. Even Mr. Hollenden was there, having been personally persuaded by the comtesse. Rose and Shirley, and Lulu and Francine de Fleury, with the Comte de Rouen and the Comte d'Arcy, constituted the wedding party.

Mr. Hollenden's present to his daughter had not yet been announced. Rose and Shirley's entreaties for him to give her one had had no effect, but to the comtesse he had not been so obdurate. His manner had been a little nervous of late, and he had fallen into long fits of abstraction, gazing into the fire and coloring when spoken to. Rose watched him with a sad anxiety which

she strove to conceal. Too well she knew what it portended.

As the comtesse embraced her brother she found an opportunity to whisper :

" It will not be money. He flatly refused, and was set upon diamonds, but we compromised on pearls. They find a more ready sale. Trust me ! They are superb !"

Raoul kissed his sister fervently upon both cheeks.

" My good angel !" he said, aloud. " It is to you I owe all my good fortune !"

Maria blushed with pleasure, and the two de Fleury girls nudged each other in malicious delight.

Shirley escorted the old marquise to her carriage, but as Rose followed in the wake of the two young French girls she looked back for an instant and saw her father in the act of kissing the hand of the Comtesse de Brissy.

CHAPTER XXIV

SHIRLEY HOLLENDEN haunted Mrs. Gregory's apartment with such dogged faithfulness that it was easy to see how it was with him. But from some occult arrangement between the two women, he never, by any chance, saw Lida alone. In vain he laid traps and worded invitations and plotted. Lida circumvented him every time, and only laughed at his discomfiture.

But Shirley had one or two memories locked in his heart which led him to believe that Lida was holding herself away from him on his account and not on her own. He had broken down her composure once or twice, and this gave him courage. The bravery and spirit the girl displayed touched the big fellow who wanted to be a soldier, as no other woman's grace or beauty had ever done.

"What nerve she has!" he used to say to himself as he sat in his studio among his paints and brushes, polishing a gun-barrel. "Here am I who have never known what it was to want for anything in the world that I couldn't get, doing nothing. And here is a delicately reared little lady thrown on the world without an hour's preparation, going to work, and making everything she touches turn into money, by Jove!"

She replied to none of his letters, and there were moments when he grew discouraged and almost despaired of her. But really to abandon a project was not in Shirley Hollenden's make-up. He even went so far as to warn Lida, in Mrs. Gregory's presence, upon the

futility of her procedures. He sat cleaning his pipe with Lida's silver-handled scissors.

"It would be of no use, Mrs. Gregory," he said, without looking around, "for any girl I had set my heart on to try to escape *me*. I'd propose to her every day for ten years. I'd write to her, telegraph to her, cable her. I'd propose to her at all three meals. I'd lie in wait for her and propose to her walking, or riding, or driving, or swimming. I'd propose to her in a cellar, on top of a 'bus or up a tree. The only thing for her to do would be to decide *how* she'd take me, for take me she'd have to."

"Dear me, Shirley!" said Mrs. Gregory, faintly. "I'm glad *I* am out of your reach. I feel quite worn out by your perseverance already."

He looked around at Lida, but she was yawning with elaborate impertinence.

"At any rate, she *got* it!" he said to himself.

He was thinking of this incident as he neared their apartment one January day. It was on the top floor and was reached by interminable flights of slippery stairs, or by one of those miserable automatic elevators into which you shut yourself, press a button, and then pray fervently that the thing will stop where you have indicated.

On this afternoon Shirley stopped, looked up the shaft, and, seeing the lift at the top floor, pressed the button for it to descend. He waited a moment, then tried again.

"I suppose the thing's stuck," he said, beginning the ascent of the stairs.

As he reached the top floor, he heard sounds which made him dash up the last flight four steps at a time. Then he folded his arms and smiled with unctuous enjoyment.

The elevator had indeed stuck, but stuck in a most malignant manner about five or six feet above the floor.

The pointed spikes of the iron gate, which failed to reach the ceiling, as ours always do, came just above the floor of the elevator, and in the act of climbing over them to reach mother earth was Lida Schermerhorn.

Hearing steps, the girl paused in terror and looked over her shoulder. When she saw Shirley she shrieked and climbed back into her prison.

Shirley stood still and looked at her. Her music-roll, a hat-box, and a golf cape were lying on the floor where she had tossed them over before her attempted escape.

"Oh, Shirley!" she cried. "*Do* help me down! I've been here half an hour and I can't make anybody hear me. What are you standing there grinning for? Aren't you going to take me down? Well, then, will you turn your back for a moment? Well, but you'll have to! I can't stay here and argue with you forever! Neither can I—well, I should rather think I *wouldn't* climb down before you. Do you think you're being kind? Do you think it's nice of you to keep me up here? I'm so tired, Shirley. I haven't had any luncheon, and I didn't have even an egg for my breakfast—only coffee and half a roll. Oh, don't be a *fool*, Shirley Hollenden! I wouldn't eat up here if you should throw them to me. Besides, I don't like them. I want to come down and have my tea. Oh, I do wish I were a little, fluffy, blue-eyed woman who cried! If I only *could* cry. I'd give a yowl that would bring you to terms. But if I tried, I'd laugh. Fancy attempting to get my own way with you by crying! But I will say this for you, you are no gentleman!"

"Will you marry me, Lida?"

"Lord! No! I wouldn't think of such a thing! Oh, *don't* go away, Shirley. I—I've really been here heaps longer than I said, and I'm nearly dead! Let me down, that's a *darling!* Well, really, Shirley Hollenden, it's downright rude of you to smoke. And that pipe smells horribly. When I have a headache smoke makes

me ill. I have a headache to-day. What are you sitting down for? You surely *can't* mean to keep me up here much longer!"

"I'm going to keep you up there, Lida Schermerhorn, until you *swear* you'll marry me. I've proposed to you so often I've lost count of the times. If Marion or any of the servants come, I'll keep them off with a gun, if necessary. I suppose you *could* sleep in that cage, couldn't you, if you forced me to stay here in this draughty passage all night? Do you know what my name is? It's Davy Crockett."

Lida's face changed. She colored a little.

"You know why I won't marry you," she said.

"That's all rot," observed Shirley, briefly.

"I simply can't get my own consent," moaned Lida.

"Can you deny that you love me? Now, be honest with yourself and with me! *Don't* you love me?"

"Yes, I do!"

"Well, then, when can you get ready to be married? This is January. Will you marry me in May?"

"No, I won't."

"June, then!"

"I won't marry you at all."

"Well, then, I might as well have a telephone put in that lift, because you sha'n't come down till you promise."

Lida sat down on the floor with her back to Shirley. Ten minutes passed. Then ten more. Neither spoke. Shirley began to fear that he would be obliged to back down and let her out. But presently she got up slowly and looked down at him with a confused air.

"'That you, Mr. Davy Crockett?'" she said.

"'Yes,'" said Shirley, springing to his feet and going towards her.

"'Then don't shoot! I'll come down!'"

"Do you mean it, dear? Do you really mean that you'll marry me?"

"Yes, I really mean it."

"Dear child!"

"Now will you turn your back?"

"Jump and I'll catch you!"

"I won't jump! I'd break my neck. No, turn more than that! And keep turned—until—no, I'm not down yet!—I'll tell you when—oh, Shirley, don't, I can't get my breath!—Yes!—I do!—How many times do you want me to tell you!—So am I—perfectly! No!—Not yet—No!—Please!—please!—There, I knew it!—You've broken my glasses!"

CHAPTER XXV

ALTHOUGH the American ambassador and his wife had worked valiantly, it was February before they had succeeded in furnishing the embassy suitably, and, of course, as yet, they had not entertained. Their first official reception was therefore set for the 15th, and Mrs. Sharp asked Rose Hollenden and Lulu and Francine de Fleury to serve the punch in the dining-room.

The young French girls had never been asked to do such a thing before, and they went quite wild with delight.

They arrived early and were fluttering around the table, slyly giggling and winking at each other, until Rose came in, looking unusually pale and tall in a white crêpe gown, embroidered heavily around the bottom in silver bullion.

They darted up to her with exclamations of delight.

" What a figure !" said Lulu.

" How that clinging stuff sets you off !" cried Francine. " But how white you are ! Lulu, where is your rouge ?"

" Rouge !" cried Rose, indignantly.

" To get so furious is quite as good," said Lulu, maliciously. " You need powder now to tone down such color ! Good heavens ! Don't be so touchy. You are like dynamite."

Mrs. Sharp came into the room just then, breathing heavily.

" How is everything ?" she said, anxiously. " I am so nervous I feel as if I should fly. All the diplomats are

coming, and I do want our first official reception to be a success."

She scratched creases from the table-cloth with her finger-nails as she talked and caught up a few salted almonds in her ungloved hand, which she munched while buttoning her other glove.

"The table looks rather bare," she said, twitching the violets to make them show more. "I suppose I really ought to have ordered more flowers, but it has cost us so much to furnish this house that I shall have to economize in every possible way. I had to choose between music and flowers, so I ordered a good band, and I shall have to trust to you young girls to make the dining-room attractive."

Rose colored hotly to see Lulu nudge Francine's elbow. She glanced hastily around the room. There were no flags, even over the picture of the President. She slipped away and ran hastily up to where she had left her maid.

"Marie, for some reason the flowers have not come," she said, guiltily. "Drive home like lightning and bring all that you can carry, and bring that large silk flag from the billiard-room. Have François help you, but hurry! And tell *no* one!"

When she re-entered the dining-room, Mrs. Sharp was saying:

"Rose, I don't know about the punch. I am temperance, you know," touching the white ribbon on her breast, "but Mr. Sharp insists on serving something intoxicating. I couldn't afford champagne, and he utterly refused to hear of a *vin ordinaire,* so we compromised on punch. It is *very* mild. I made it myself. But I know I have done wrong to serve it at all. I suppose I shall have to resign from the Temperance Union. There is also lemon frappé, which is cooling and harmless. But I am afraid people won't drink it if they can

get punch. Therefore, I look to *you* to throw your influence on the side of the frappé."

"Miss Trotter!" announced the footman.

The daughter of the first secretary came in. She was an apparition from Egypt, Illinois, where her father had been coroner.

"I came early," she said, in a nasal voice which cut Rose like a knife, "because you asked me to pour. Pa won't be here for two hours yet. He says he's beginning to wish he spoke the lingo. At first he said he didn't care, just as long as he got all he wanted to eat and drink, but life over here in 'gay Pahree' is opening his eyes a little. I suppose *I* ought to speak it, too. But I only took French six months, and then gave it up. Life's too short to bother with fol-de-rols like that!"

"That's all right, my dear," said Mrs. Sharp, absently.

"Here comes Mr. Sharp," said Miss Trotter. "And he's got on his Loyal Legion button. I wanted pa to wear his masonic uniform, but he wouldn't do it. He is going to wear his Grand Army button and a badge of the Fireman's Brigade. He said these Frenchies wouldn't know a hook-and-ladder badge from a Victoria Cross.

"Is Mr. Townshend going to be here?" asked Lulu de Fleury.

"Yes, indeed. He only arrived yesterday, but Mr. Sharp made him promise to come. He dined with us last night," said Mrs. Sharp, patting Lulu's hand.

The young French girl kissed Mrs. Sharp's plump cheek, and she and her sister went out into the corridor. Presently Rose saw the butler and footman follow them and return, solemnly trying to repress their laughter. They brought in a large punch-bowl, and Lulu ladled out a glassful and tasted it.

"Thunder!" she whispered to her sister. "It is nothing but eggs and milk. A gallon of it wouldn't go to your head."

" Did you tell him to hurry ?" murmured Francine.

" I did better than that. I gave each of them five francs for himself."

" If you try any of your tricks on Mr. Townshend, I'll spoil your game with Shirley," whispered Lulu, fiercely.

" Well, if you make the punch too strong they won't drink it," retorted her sister. " See that you don't overreach yourself. The last time you put in more than Mr. Hollenden said, and it was bitter."

" Rose, I have asked the Marquise d'Auteuil and the Comtesse de Brissy and the Duchesse de Briancourt, and they are all coming !" announced Mrs. Sharp, with spots of crimson coming into her cheeks. " I am sure they never were inside the American embassy before."

" I am so glad, dear Mrs. Sharp, for your sake," said Rose, earnestly.

" They are beginning to come !" cried Mrs. Sharp. " I must go. Attend to everything, Rose, and give any orders you like, but — dear ! do try to see that none of the young men touch the punch ! I don't know what I *should* do if I thought any one took his first taste of liquor in *my* house !"

" ' Liquor !' Oh, God !" sniggered Lulu de Fleury. Her sister pinched her.

" What do you hear from your married daughter, Hollenden ?" asked the ambassador, buttoning his glove in the salon, and walking nervously around the empty rooms.

" Good news for her husband," growled Mr. Hollenden. " That Frenchman sold out to Jim Skinner—you know Jim, don't you ? He's in partnership with a man by the name of Bilkerson, from 'Frisco—for a cool million and a half, and I'll bet you a case of champagne that my blooming son-in-law has the money in his jeans at this moment."

"Well, well, I declare!" said Mr. Sharp. "When did that slump come? Just after he sold, didn't it?"

"The day after, I believe. I'd have given a hundred thousand to charity if it had come the day before."

"You don't love your son-in-law like the good Christian you are!" laughed Mr. Sharp. "Well, I don't blame you. That whole family are a set of sharks, if I am not mistaken."

"Well, then, I think you are," said Mr. Hollenden, putting his hands under his coat-tails and looking up into the tall ambassador's face from his pale eyes. "That sister of his is the most simple-minded, sincere, unaffected little woman I ever met."

"You don't say so! I should have said she was the worst of the lot."

"You never were more mistaken in your life," said Mr. Hollenden, balancing on his heels and toes. "She has the cynical habit of talk that all the French have, but at heart she is like a child. People don't understand her, that's all."

A queer smile hovered around the thin lips of the ambassador as he turned away.

"They're beginning to come, Ambrose!" cried Mrs. Sharp, in great excitement. "Come and stand here by me!"

"Now, don't get nervous, Fanny," said Mr. Sharp. "And, whatever you do, don't ask me peoples' names if I mumble them, for I sha'n't know them! I've given orders for Lampert to announce each name very distinctly."

Rose found Captain Corcoran, the American Military Attaché, in the corridor, and waylaid him with enthusiasm.

"Oh, how fine you look in your uniform!" she cried. "I wish I could have *made* you wear it to my ball!"

"As if anything could have made your ball more

brilliant!" said Captain Corcoran. "I have been to many handsome balls in my time, especially when I was attaché at the Court of St. James and in Washington and New York, but I tell you sincerely, my dear Miss Hollenden, I never saw so beautiful a ball as yours, and, if you will accept a soldier's honest compliment, you were the most beautiful woman there!"

"Oh! oh!" cried Rose, laughing and clapping her hands. "I am so glad I stopped you out here!"

"You are not vexed at my boldness?"

"Vexed? I am delighted! It is horrible flattery, but I swallow it whole and cry, 'More! More!' I wonder how you knew that I was feeling just a little sensitive over the sumptuousness of it? I was afraid it was too fine. I overheard one or two remarks of my French guests calculating the cost of the wines and flowers."

"Don't pay any attention to them," returned the captain, with spirit. "The French would comment on the cost of their resurrection robes and bite corners off the glittering walls of the New Jerusalem to see if it were 22-karat gold. They are the most sordid nation who tread the globe to-day, and there is no nation who cares so little for money as those who live in 'The Land of the Dollar.'"

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" cried the girl, kindling. "How glad I am to hear such praise of my country. Do you think we shall have war with Spain?" she added, anxiously. "Did you see the morning papers?"

"I have already applied to be recalled and attached to my regiment," said Captain Corcoran. "I hope the papers recalling me are already under consideration in the adjutant-general's office!"

"Oh *no!*" cried Rose, in dismay. "You believe, then, that we shall have war! I can't think it possible. But how I honor you for your promptness! How I honor you!"

" The French will side with Spain," said the captain, abruptly. " Sharp thought best, under the circumstances, not to use any flags in the decorations to-night. Personally, I think it was a mistake. I would have intertwined the French and American flags, as a sign of our good will, at any rate !"

" *Never !*" cried Rose. " If France sympathizes with Spain, I would never pollute ' Old Glory ' by having it touch the tricolor !"

She pulled aside the portière as she spoke, and Captain Corcoran saw the servants draping a beautiful American flag over the portraits, framed together, of George Washington and President McKinley.

" By whose orders ?" he asked, in surprise.

" Mine !" cried Rose. " That flag was given me by the officers of the battle-ship *Maine* in New Orleans Harbor, where they gave a dance for me. I sent for it and had it put there !"

" Bravo, Barbara Freitchie ! You'll enlist when war is declared, won't you ?"

" Oh, if I only could ! The proudest day of my life, if I were a man, would be the day I saw myself in the uniform of my country and held my President's commission in my hand, permitting me to go and fight her battles !"

" Do you look upon the uniform as a patriotic thing ? I thought all women liked it because it is—well, because it is a uniform. You know its inherent beauty is spoiled for officers because street-car conductors, petty railway officials, and coachmen copy it as nearly as possible. Military tailors keep caps on hand by the hundred to supply brass bands and street-car companies. And if ever I got caught in a uniform in America at a railway station, it never failed to happen that I wasn't mistaken for the conductor, and once a little boy came up and asked me when the band was going to play !"

" Oh," groaned Rose, wringing her hands. "*I* want

to be Congress ! I want to be the President ! I wish I could be Tzar of the United States for just twenty minutes ! I would enact laws enough in that time to right all the wrongs our regular army are suffering under now. I *know* you are right in what you say. I was brought up at a cavalry post, and one of my greatest ambitions ever since I was big enough to climb on a horse and ride with the troop has been to see a law enacted to protect the army blue !"

" How would you do it if you were Congress and the President and the Tzar ?"

" Why, I would frame a Federal law making it an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment for anybody, under any circumstances or for any purpose, to use or cause to be used an inch of blue cloth such as regular army uniforms are made of. Nor should any society, club, or organization be permitted to adopt a uniform which had for its decorations anything even resembling the insignia of the army. I would forbid railway companies to use any gold or silver bullion in uniforms of its employees, and I would frame a law that protected every smallest distinctive particular used in our regular army uniform !"

" Bravo ! It should be called ' The Hollenden Bill for the Protection of the Army Blue !' "

" A few lawsuits over such an issue would do more towards the instruction of the masses in knowledge of the uniform of the regular army than anything I know of," said Rose. " The ignorance of civilians concerning it disgusts me. And another thing I'd do to educate the populace would be to enact a law compelling army officers to wear their uniforms, as they do in Russia and Germany, at all times and on all occasions except when out of the country on leave. If the people saw it they couldn't fail to love it. It would mean something to them."

"It is very hot and uncomfortable," said Captain Corcoran.

"I know it is," said Rose, quickly, "yet I never suggested this to any officer, no matter how fond he was of his own ease and how glad he was to put on 'cits,' who didn't admit that if all the other officers were obliged to—if it were an army regulation enacted for the education of the people in patriotism—he would gladly bear the discomfort of it."

"That is perfectly true, and I agree with you. But it is a point of pride with the purists in the army never to wear uniform except when on duty or on occasions of state at Washington."

He paused thoughtfully for a moment and then said:

"Wouldn't you put the volunteers and militia into another color and keep the 'army blue' for the regulars?"

"Wouldn't I, though? I'd put the regular army of the United States, small as it is, on a footing where it would be respected and where it belongs!" cried Rose.

"Have you heard—but of course you have!—what Miss Schermerhorn calls Mrs. Gregory's dog?"

"I have, indeed. Lida is so wicked."

"She is perfectly charming. I congratulate you with all my heart in the prospect of having her for a sister-in-law."

"Oh!" exclaimed Rose. "Who is that beautiful, tall officer who just went in, in that pure white uniform trimmed with gold?"

"That is the Austrian uniform for a full general. Stunning, isn't it? Makes mine look like thirty cents."

"I'd like to see it at close range," said Rose. "I never saw anything so beautiful."

"It is Count Rudolf von Pflügl. May I introduce him to you? He speaks both French and English."

The rooms had been rapidly filling during this little

conversation, owing to the custom in Paris of providing no dressing-rooms. It seems a barbarous custom to Americans, for ladies are obliged either to check their wraps or to leave them with their footmen, and to go into the presence of their hostess uncertain as to the hang of their trains or the angle of their head-dress. But it has the advantage of preventing the long tarrying in the dressing-rooms so annoying to the waiting hostess below.

As Rose entered the salon on the arm of Captain Corcoran her beauty produced a hum of admiration. A dozen gorgeous uniforms pressed forward to claim the acquaintance of the fortunate American military attaché, among them the white one of Count von Pflügl.

He held his plumed hat on his left arm, placed his right hand on the hilt of his jewelled sword, and, bringing his heels together with their clanking spurs, he made her a military bow. The Austrian attaché, a Hungarian by birth, kissed the American girl's hand.

"Ah, mademoiselle," said Count von Pflügl, much chagrined, "if I had known that in your country that was permitted! In France one is only allowed to kiss the hand of madame—never of mademoiselle."

"Our American men never kiss the hand—that is, as a serious act of homage, but I have seen it here so often that—"

"Mademoiselle, believe me, if I had kissed your hand it would have been a serious act of homage. I have never kissed the hand of my empress with more reverence than I kiss the hand of perfect beauty."

"Ah, then, in the case of your charming empress, you kissed the hand of both at once, as in her youth she was considered the most beautiful princess Europe has ever known, was she not?"

Captain Corcoran resigned his place at Rose's side to Baron Sternburg, the Swedish envoy, delighted at the

American girl's adroit reception of the handsome Austrian's flattery, and rejoicing to see that all the pomp and glitter of the magnificent uniforms pouring into the room did not disturb her mental poise.

"I had the honor to see you, mademoiselle," said Prince Orloff, the Russian Ambassador, "at the Théatre de la Porte Saint-Martin, at the first representation of Rostand's play."

"Oh, 'Cyrano de Bergerac'! Yes, we were there. Do you know, I think that play will be a classic, and that some day we shall all be proud to say that we were present at its first representation."

"I am already proud to say so," responded the beautiful old Russian, "for it was there that I first saw you."

"Lord Lucknow, you are just in time," said Rose to the English Ambassador, who presented himself before her, followed by Sir Arthur Carteret and Colonel Sir Hubert Leeds-Mariner, the attaché. "Prince Orloff was just flattering me unmercifully."

"Russia and England must forget all national differences, and join hands in common worship at your shrine," said Lord Lucknow.

"For shame, Lord Lucknow!" cried Rose. "That is not the speech of an Englishman. You are acquiring the vices of the French."

"Nothing of the kind, my dear Miss Hollenden. That was the speech of an honest Englishman. The only time we Englishmen haul down our colors is when a beautiful American girl calls on us to surrender!"

The salons, although small, began to take on a most brilliant air. It was the first official reception of a new administration, and the invitations had commanded all officials to appear in full-dress uniform.

There were tall diplomats, with commanding figures and military bearing; short, fat representatives of southern climes; lemon-colored little men from the South

American republics, whose names are only associated in our minds with geography days, but bearing a proud front second to none, with their brilliant costumes and jewelled decorations. Only two or three Americans, including the ambassador of seventy millions of people, and the servants, who moved noiselessly in and out among the guests, were in plain black. Unfortunately, Mr. Sharp, although he had been a gallant soldier in the Civil War, lacked a military bearing, which might have distinguished him, even in the conventional, hideous evening dress, but he walked with a somewhat painful stoop, as if he were ashamed of his gaunt height.

Rose was not feeling particularly proud of her country's representatives, but she held her head high and moved about, meeting all the distinguished guests and holding a genuine court whenever and wherever she paused. It was a night of triumph for American women, for the Baronne Valencia and Mrs. Gregory were surrounded only second to Rose herself. The stream of people pouring in and out of the small rooms, to and from the dining-room, never seemed to slacken. Faces grew flushed as if from heat, and Rose ordered some windows opened. Gayer and faster flew the conversation, and nobody seemed to have the slightest intention of leaving. Rose watched matters with surprise, and once or twice made an effort to relieve the de Fleury girls at the table, but was sent back to hold court in the salons.

After things were going so that they would continue of their own momentum, Lulu de Fleury took a glass of the lemon *frappé*, and, putting a teaspoonful of punch from the bowl her sister was serving, she carried it in to Mrs. Sharp, who still stood at her post.

"Drink a little of this," she said. "You must be nearly dropping from fatigue."

"How thoughtful of you, my dear child!" said Mrs.

Sharp. " I didn't realize that I felt the need of it. My, how good that is ! but it tastes of something. Get me another glass, my dear."

" She took to it like an old toper," whispered the young French girl to her sister. " Put a little more of the arrac into this glass."

" Dear me !" said Mrs. Sharp. " How delicious this simple drink is ! How *can* people want liquor when frozen lemonade is so good ? I wonder what this is flavored with."

" I put a little *kirschwasser* in. It was quite tasteless without," said Lulu, demurely.

" *' Kirschwasser ?'* What is that ?"

" Why, it is a table-water made from cherries," said Mademoiselle de Fleury. " We French use it a great deal for flavoring purposes. Your butler had it."

" How very nice ! I am so glad you thought of it ! Are not these rooms stifling ? Send one of the servants for a fan, will you please !"

" Certainly !" cried the girl, running away to hide her convulsed face.

" It's all right !" she whispered in Francine's ear. " She has already commenced to feel good. The idiots are walking around in the salons carrying their glasses with them, but even if she sees them she will think she knows the worst, for has she not drank two glasses of the harmless stuff herself ? Now put the Trotter down here and tell her not to move nor let Rose dislodge her."

" But will she, even if we tell her ?"

" Won't she, just ? She hates Rose because she is so handsome, and the Trotter has had just enough arrac to make her as obstinate as a mule. I believe she'd hit anybody with the punch ladle who bothered her now."

The two young girls, each with a generous glass of punch in their hands, slipped noiselessly out of the room and made their way to the top of the house.

Some half an hour afterwards, Rose saw Shirley and Townshend enter the salon together and look significantly at each other. Shirley grinned and shook his head. Her color rose, for Townshend had not yet paid his respects to her, and she had not seen him since he had fought his duel for her sake. She could see, too, her father hovering around the brilliant Comtesse de Brissy. He had not left her side since she entered. Rose was intensely uncomfortable.

The beautiful Duchesse de Briancourt made her way slowly towards the hostess, leaning upon her son's arm and supported by a tortoise-shell stick set with jewels, more for ornament than for use, for she was gaining strength finely day by day.

At her entrance the Comtesse de Brissy promptly turned her back to avoid speaking to her, but the magnificent old French woman did not even pass her way, promenading slowly through the rooms, and pausing to speak to Rose Hollenden and to compliment the girl's splendid beauty.

Over the head of the duchesse, Rose could see that at last Townshend was making his way towards her. Her heart beat fast and her gray eyes darkened, but just then the duchesse turned away, and, seeing Townshend, released her son and bade Townshend give her his arm and take her to her carriage.

Ashamed and annoyed by her sickening sense of disappointment, Rose made a movement of dismissal to her court, who fell back just in time to witness the most humiliating *contretemps* of the evening.

The old Marquise d'Auteuil had taken fresh courage upon Raoul's marvellous accession to wealth, and it had not been difficult to persuade her to set her aristocratic foot for the first time inside the hitherto despised American embassy. Her gown was a gorgeous one, and she had even forgotten herself so far as to enjoy

conversation with certain of the diplomats. Prince Orloff was an old friend, and she was just signing to Eugénie that she wished to go when the comtesse whispered in her ear :

" In the interest of the tapestries, you must go home, and take both the maids, while I adopt the American custom of permitting Mr Hollenden to drive home with me. Take courage ! Matters are progressing well."

" Oh, will people never go !" thought Rose, wearily. The rooms were still packed and the poor host and hostess were compelled to keep their places.

But suddenly Rose saw the tall, bent figure of the American Ambassador approaching. As he neared the Marquise d'Auteuil, she turned from Prince Orloff, and, mistaking Mr. Sharp for a servant, she said, in a distinct tone which everybody heard :

" Garçon, call the carriage of the Marquise d'Auteuil !"

She was so near-sighted that she did not then perceive her error, but permitted the prince to take her empty glass and to hand it to a servant who approached from the other side.

The courtly Russian came to the rescue of the American in a magnificent manner.

" I shall be jealous, madame, if you permit any one to call your carriage but myself !"

And, bowing, he walked to the door of the salon and cried out :

" The carriage of the Marquise d'Auteuil !"

The man at the door took up the cry " The carriage of the Marquise d'Auteuil !" and from footman to footman it passed until it reached the court-yard and the street.

Rose had turned so pale at this *contretemps* that Shirley and Lida Schermerhorn came up behind her and Shirley whispered :

"Buck up, Rosie! Shall I get you something to drink for a bracer?"

"There isn't any bracer here," said Rose, wearily.

"No bracer!" cried Lida.

"Why, what do you call this rough-house punch that is twice as bad as anything that father makes?" cried Shirley.

"That's only lemon *frappé*!" said Rose, derisively. "Mrs. Sharp is a member of the Temperance Union, and told me to encourage the young men to drink it!"

"Taste mine!" cried Lida. "How's that? Any lemon about *that*?"

"Good Heavens! Why, it's arrac! I wonder who did it?"

"I know who did it! The de Fleury girls. They told me they had run a bill for rum that would throw Mrs. Sharp into epilepsy," said Lida.

"Well, I wondered why nobody except a few women went home," said Rose.

"Oh, this won't do a thing to these foreigners!" cried Shirley. "They, most of them, never tasted an American mixed drink before, and they don't know its deadly destroying power. To-morrow they can't get their heads in at the *porte-cochère*."

"Why, from the number of 'American bars' one sees all over Europe, one would think nobody drank anything *but* American drinks!" said Lida.

"Oh no! Besides, these so-called 'American bars' couldn't mix a drink that an American would recognize, and as to foreigners drinking them, you don't see one Frenchman at Henry's to fifty Americans. No, with but few exceptions, American bars in a foreign land are a delusion and a snare."

"Like the American shoes!" cried Lida. "I wish you could see the funny things calculated to fit short, fat feet which masquerade in Paris under the name

'American shoes.' And London is only a shade better."

"American women have the only pretty feet in the world, *I* think!" said Shirley, judiciously.

"Where are the de Fleury's now?" asked Rose, who had not been listening.

"They are up on the stairs of the third floor, nearly paralyzed," whispered Lida.

"Why, how awful!" murmured Rose.

"Oh, they have that balcony for an excuse. They say they are there to watch the shooting-stars."

Rose left the room hastily and ran up-stairs, not knowing exactly what she was going to do. As she reached the top of the second flight, she almost tripped over the figure of Lulu and some man whom Rose did not know.

"Lulu," said Rose, taking her hand and pulling her to her feet. "My brother and Miss Schermerhorn want you. Go down at once."

The young French girl stood up sulkily and obeyed. Rose smoothed Lulu's hair.

"I beg your pardon, mademoiselle," said the man.

"Please take her down and look after her," said Rose.

"Pooh! Look after yourself!" cried Lulu, derisively. "I am all right. Did you think I didn't know what I was about? I've been sitting here for an hour! Anybody who got to the balcony had to climb over me."

Rose watched them descend the stairs. Mademoiselle de Fleury was, as she had declared, amply able to take care of herself.

With a sickening sense of disgust, Rose made her way to the balcony, walled in by glass, through one of whose open panes the cool, fresh air was blowing. As she stepped out, a figure at the farther end stirred and then came towards her.

It was Townshend.

He took both her hands without a word and drew her into the light, looking into her eyes.

"You are crying!" he exclaimed. "Oh, Rose, my love! Won't you let me help you?"

For a moment the girl's heart leaped as if to burst its prison. Then came the recollection of the scene she had just quitted, of the deceit, the foulness, the uncleanness of the Parisian's life—the life *he* liked and had quitted America for—and her whole soul rose in rebellion.

"No!" she cried, sharply.

As if he read her mind, he only held her hands more closely.

"I would give my life for you," he said, simply.

"You have already risked it for me," she answered him, softly; "yet, unkind that you were, you would never give me an opportunity to thank—no, not to thank you! But to tell you that—I understood."

"You understood? Then I am satisfied. I want no greater recompense from you than to believe that. Rose, I am going to ask you a question."

"No, no!" cried the girl. "I will not let myself listen to you!"

"How truthful you are, my girl! You will not let yourself listen to me! Oh, my love, why not? What have I done that you should build up a wall between your heart and one which beats only for you?"

"I cannot tell you. But sometimes I think—"

"Well, sometimes you think—"

"No, no! I cannot finish. Let me go! I am so depressed. I feel as if something awful were happening in America!"

He bent and kissed the palm of each hand, and even through her glove he could feel the shiver his touch gave her.

She went down and took up the position she had

left, and Townshend stood in the doorway watching her.

By this time it had got to be late, even for Paris, and every one seemed just waiting for the American girl, the centre of attraction, to make a movement to go, when suddenly Shirley Hollenden approached with a pale face, and said, hurriedly, to the American Ambassador:

"Mr. Sharp, pardon me! But bad news has arrived! I have just received word that the battle-ship *Maine* has been blown up in Havana Harbor, and four hundred men killed. Here is the official despatch!"

Mr. Sharp hastily tore it open and confirmed the awful report. For a moment no one spoke.

"On a friendly visit in Spanish waters!" he added.

A faint, sibilant sound, almost like a hiss, came from the outermost rim of the group. The diplomats heard it and stirred uneasily.

"The flower of the American navy!" said Captain Corcoran, as if speaking to himself.

At the words "American navy," one or two of the foreign naval attachés covered their lips to hide the suspicion of a smile of irrepressible derision. Rose Hollenden's flashing eyes, sweeping the impassive faces around her, saw it, and the angry, outraged blood began to prickle in her veins. In spite of the polite murmurs of regret which now began to loosen people's tongues, she felt the indescribable, almost impalpable sense of hostility which sensitive women feel in the air. One or two farthest from her began to slip away, led by the action of their wives, without making their adieus, or even formally expressing their sympathy. A sense of physical helplessness, because she was a woman, when a man's courage was beating in her heart, assailed the girl, and a dry sob rose in her throat. Her country insulted, her flag dishonored, hundreds of her brave seamen going down, down into the awful black-

ness of death without a warning or a chance to fight for their lives, and here, in a country trembling on the verge of a declared sympathy with their cowardly destroyers and assassins, not one cordial, earnest demonstration of sympathy ; not one sign of rallying to her country's support !

Diplomacy, perhaps !

She ground her teeth at such ignoble refuge for courage. Suddenly a thought struck her. She darted into the now deserted dining-room, and, tearing down the great silk flag whose staff towered above even her own tall head, she carried it just inside the door of the salon, and, drawing its stars and stripes well out behind her with her left hand, she cried :

" Look, if you will, upon a flag which once floated over the great battle-ship *Maine*, which now lies at the bottom of Havana Harbor, with four hundred of her brave men on board ! I call upon every man and woman here, who have hearts, to forget diplomatic complications and salute the flag of my country and of the brave battleship *Maine !*"

A prince of the house of Bonaparte murmured in her ear :

" No one could refuse to salute the flag of *mademoiselle !*"

Rose's angry figure spurned the Frenchman's ill-timed flattery.

" The *American* flag !" she repeated, sweeping her scornful eyes over him. He turned on his heel.

Captain Corcoran shivered, and Mr. Sharp's face expressed his intense anxiety of the result of the American girl's daring. There was a moment of tense silence.

Lord Lucknow, the English Ambassador, was the first to press forward. Prince Orloff, the brave Russian, whose breast was covered with medals, followed,

holding his plumed hat high above his noble white head and crying :

" Bravo ! Bravo !"

He stooped, and taking Rose's hand, which still clutched the folds of the flag, he kissed hand and flag together before them all.

Instantly the tide turned. Every man there, even including the Spaniards, raised their hats in the air and saluted the Stars and Stripes of the battle-ship *Maine*.

Rose's lips trembled and her eyes glistened. Then she turned, and, leaning her head against the flag-staff, she lost control of herself completely and burst into a storm of tears.

" Courage, mademoiselle !" whispered Prince Orloff.

Inexpressibly touched by her grief, the group melted away, and the salon was empty, save for a few Americans, who, with pale faces, had been witnesses of this extraordinary scene.

The American Ambassador went up to Rose and laid his hands on her two shoulders.

" My brave girl !" he said. " You have done to-night what even a soldier would not have dared to do. God bless you for your courage !"

CHAPTER XXVI

In the handsomest suite of apartments in the Waldorf-Astoria the new Marquise d'Auteuil sat weeping stormily.

It was not often that Maria wept. She possessed other means of gaining her own way, and her conceit was such that no one had power to wound her—no one, that is, except her husband. Through him she was vulnerable at every point, and of this knowledge he took a cruel advantage.

He was too clever to beat her. He chose rather to torture her by silence, by a fixed stare which drove her frantic, and by an exaggerated courtesy in public which rendered her so nervous that her own awkwardness became almost grotesque.

However, in partial extenuation of Raoul's conduct, one must consider the daily and hourly horror the beauty-loving, over-civilized Frenchman suffered in being chained to this woman for life. The contrast between his wife whom he was obliged to see, to hear, and occasionally to touch, after having been for five years the lover of the most beautiful woman in Paris, was a living death. He grew to hate Maria with a malignity which racked his nerves, destroyed his appetite, and turned his every waking thought into a desire, a prayer, a plot to be rid of her. That she was so desperately in love with him made it worse. Her poor starved soul was so eager to pour itself out in a mad worship of her husband that she could not realize that her presence made him shiver

and her caresses nauseated him. She began to trick responses from him. She made him extravagant presents, knowing that he must perforce kiss her in return. Once he voluntarily laid his hand on her thin shoulder, and the unusual caress so maddened the woman that she seized him in her arms and covered his face with such kisses that for a moment he was too staggered to resist. He said nothing after he had released himself. He only gave her one fierce look, and then, bringing the diamond buttons she had just given him, he laid them on her toilet-table and left the room. Nor did he return to the hotel for two days and two nights, during which interminable period Maria never removed her clothes, but walked the floor in an agony of suspense, which left her a pitiable object to greet his return. When, finally, he did return, he made no explanation, only inquired formally after her health, to which her white lips framed the reply that she was well, and there the subject rested. Neither ever mentioned it. Raoul found the diamonds replaced in his room, and he suffered them to remain, but never wore them in her sight.

Strange to say, this treatment only intensified her passion for him. She was so dazed between her natural conceit, which led her to believe that every man who looked twice at her was fascinated, backed up by Raoul's fervent ante-nuptial protestations, and his curious, perfectly polite treatment of her in public, that she never fully took in the force of the fact that he hated her. The worst charge she ever made against him in the secret depths of her own heart was that he was " cold."

On this particular morning he had elected to stare her out of countenance all during the breakfast, which was served in their own dining-room. His fixed gaze fascinated her almost into a state of hypnosis. When she attempted to eat, her hand trembled, and she laid down her fork, with the morsel of food untasted. If he had

been persistent enough he could have starved her to death. As it was, she ate only after he had left her.

When breakfast was over he bowed to her, and, going into his own room, he locked the door behind him. After he found that she loved to be in his bedroom during his absence, he always locked her out, but, in spite of having endured this for several weeks, she never became accustomed to it. The noise of the sliding bolt seemed to scrape along her raw nerves.

But on this occasion he had no sooner locked the door than he unlocked it and came into her boudoir. He had never crossed its threshold before, and her silly soul fondly imagined that this inaugurated the change in affairs for which she lived in hourly expectation.

She whipped her handkerchief out of sight and watched him close the door and stand with his back against it without approaching her, before she realized that his face was livid with rage.

"You have had a duplicate key made to my door, and you have dared to enter that room in my absence!" he hissed.

"I have not!" cried Maria, boldly.

"Don't lie to me! Your maid has betrayed you. I have the key in my hand!"

Maria's hand flew to the chain inside her gown. It was gone.

"That beast! that viper!" she screamed, on the instant falling into one of her old rages. Suddenly she ceased and began to moan.

"Don't, Raoul! My husband! Don't look at me like that! I will not speak! I will not even breathe if you will turn your eyes away!"

Her breath came draggingly from between her parched lips with a hoarse, rasping noise, as if she were going into a fit. Flecks of foam gathered at the corners of her mouth, and the muscles in her neck twitched, hor-

ribly distorting her face. The Frenchman had tortured her almost to the limit of her endurance.

"Tell me how you dared take such a liberty!" he said, sternly, to break the spell.

Maria was so weakened by lack of food and sleepless vigils and her unrequited passion that her little remaining strength gave out. She sank to the floor, sobbing quietly, too worn out to resist or even to fear him as usual.

"Answer me!" he said, not offering to go to her assistance.

"Because I wanted to be in your room," she muttered.

"To spy upon me! To read my letters! To search out my private affairs!" said the Frenchman, with a short laugh. He was in a more horrible fear of her, if she had only known it, than ever she was of him, for, secure in the knowledge of the locked door, he had left letters from Lili lying in his desk, in which she spoke confidently of the joy his promise to return to her had given. The enormous sum of money paid down for the sale of the "Lonely Mollie" mine, and the stocks and securities, were still in Maria's possession, for he had considered the time not yet ripe to force the money from her. He had moments of believing that, even in spite of his treatment of her, she could yet be persuaded into making it over to him peaceably.

At his accusation Maria lifted her head.

"Indeed, I did not! How can you believe such a cruel thing? Why should I wish to spy upon you?"

"How long have you had this key?"

"Only three days."

Raoul moved uneasily. He did not in the least believe her. He knew her crafty nature, and a guilty conscience made him more suspicious than usual.

"Do you expect me to believe that you had that duplicate key made for nothing — for no purpose at

all? No, madame! Women like you do not go to that trouble for a whim."

Maria dragged herself up until she supported herself on her hands.

"Is it possible that you, who claim to know women so well, do not yet understand your wife's heart—for I *am* your wife, Raoul, although I have not a wife's privileges. The only solace I had was to go into your room in your absence, and care for your things. I was reduced to taking up the work of a maid-servant in order to touch your brushes—to handle the clothes *you* had worn. Then you found that I disturbed things, and you took that joy—the only one I had—away from me. In my desperation I tried to get it back. That's all."

A heart of stone would have melted under Maria's painful confession of worship for even this man's belongings, but to Raoul each word drove his disgust of her deeper into his soul. He did not want—nay, he loathed her love! If she had hated and avoided him, he would have turned into her courteous cavalier, and they would have lived amiably under the same roof, and each gone his and her separate way in calm content.

"We do not trust each other as a husband and wife should," he muttered, to gain time.

The words fell upon Maria's ears with a shock of joy. It seemed the first step towards a different basis of life.

"It is you who do not trust me, Raoul! I trust you with everything I have on earth!"

"In theory, yes! But not in fact. You are the rich wife—I, the poor, dependent husband, having nothing—not one sou in my own right. It mortifies me so that I can think of nothing else. I forget even to caress you in my humiliation of spirit."

"Would you—that is, if I believed—oh Raoul, *don't* look at me that way! You don't realize how it frightens me!"

"Then be careful how your commercial American nature leads you to make a bargain for an emotion which should rush forth from the heart of its own accord. My position has been too hateful to my pride for me to feel as I expected—nay, hoped to feel, before our marriage."

"But half of the stock was yours, under the marriage settlements, and therefore half of the money and securities are yours!" cried Maria. "You are at liberty to do what you wish with them."

"Bah!" cried the Frenchman, contemptuously. "That shows how much you know about my affairs! Every franc of that has already gone to pay my most pressing debts. I not only have nothing left, but all of my debts are not yet paid. Your half is all that we have. *I* have nothing."

"Is it on your conscience to pay your other debts, Raoul?" asked Maria, eagerly.

"No, those can wait," he said, looking down to hide the glitter of eagerness in his eyes.

"Oh, Raoul! I do not care for myself! If you will only love me—I mean, I will make over another sum to you, so that your pride need not be hurt at receiving from me—God knows you are welcome to it—welcome to the last drop of my blood if it would buy you an hour's happiness! I understand your fine, high-strung nature, my husband! Believe me, I know how to love you. We could be so happy together!"

"I can never be happy," said Raoul, gloomily, "as long as my wife has more money than I."

He went over to where Maria lay and tenderly lifted her to her couch. In a transport of gratitude, and trembling from head to foot, she seized his hand and covered it with kisses. He suffered it to rest against her burning cheek. His glove protected him from actual contact.

" I shall not have more money than you, my darling ! I will make over the whole sum to you, with the exception of a little for my own private use—to buy presents for my husband, perhaps, without having to ask him for the money !"

" If I thought you meant what you said—" began Raoul.

Maria started up.

" I will do it now !" she said.

He held out his arms to her, and, with a cry, she flung herself into them.

" Oh, Raoul ! Raoul !" she sobbed.

" What is it, mouse ?"

" ' Mouse !' That is the name you used to call me before we were married ! Oh, has it been the hurt to your dear pride about this hateful money that has kept you away from me all this time ?"

" I could not bear to speak of it," answered the Frenchman. " I kept thinking that your own exquisite delicacy, of which I thought I saw so many evidences before we were married, would suggest it to you. When day after day passed, and you did not mention it, my heart hardened. I grew cold and suspicious."

Maria's tears began to flow afresh. Raoul looked anxiously at the fine tucks in his shirt front, then resigned himself.

" But it is all settled now, isn't it ? And we shall be lovers again !"

" It *will be* all settled very soon, I hope," corrected the Frenchman, gently. " If you feel equal to going out ?" he added, tenderly.

Maria blushed with happiness.

" I feel perfectly well !" she averred. "And I would be perfectly happy if—if you would kiss me !"

Her husband started.

" Not if you don't want to," said Maria, humbly.

"Not *want* to! I was only wondering if a long caress like this would not do—were not better, I mean."

"No, I want you to kiss me."

He bent and swept her brow with his mustache.

"On my *lips!*" cried Maria, passionately, seizing his arm.

He suffered himself to be kissed madly a dozen times, then, holding her away from him, he said:

"I shall be waiting for you in half an hour. Can you be ready?"

"Indeed I can! Oh, my dear husband, how happy you have made me!"

Raoul smiled.

Maria duly made over the bulk of the sum she had received from the sale of her mine. She had the wit to keep back one hundred thousand dollars for herself, and in the presence of other persons her husband dared not demur. But afterwards he persuaded her to make a will in his favor, leaving him this sum and all the personal property, including her jewels, which were of great value.

After this final sacrifice Maria felt sure that she had now removed the last shadow on her husband's happiness, and she was just permitting herself to revel in her future prospects of bliss when she received a telegram from Raoul, saying:

"Suddenly called out of town on important business. Shall return in time to sail on *La Bourgogne*."

In a frenzy of anxiety and disappointment, Maria made every effort to discover his whereabouts, but in vain. She had been out when the telegram came, and in the meantime his man had packed Raoul's belongings and both had disappeared without a trace.

For the whole of a miserable week the unfortunate woman heard nothing from her husband. She was tortured by doubts of his return, and she cursed her

folly in making over the property to him. But these periods of depression were followed by thoughts of his pride, the position he held at home, and she was comforted by the belief that, after all, he really loved her and would return.

La Bourgogne was to sail at ten o'clock in the morning, and up to the night before Maria had had no news of Raoul.

Nevertheless she sent all her luggage down to the steamer, and proudly told her maid that the marquis would join her on the pier.

In all this trouble and anxiety, Maria had missed the faithful Clemence daily and hourly, but the comtesse had strongly cautioned her brother against permitting the shrewd old woman to accompany her mistress to America.

" She is too clever by half, Raoul," the comtesse had said, " and by far too sincerely devoted to Maria's interests. She is Maria's *confidante,* and would be likely to thwart your plans when you were on the eve of success."

Accordingly, the comtesse had given Maria her own maid, a thoroughly unscrupulous French girl, who spied upon Maria and betrayed her into her husband's hands with malicious delight.

Fifine heartily agreed with Maria that the marquis would sail with them, for in the few hours that the duplicate key had been in her possession she had read all of Lili's letters, and she knew that even Maria's fortune would be useless to the Parisian unless he could return to the boulevards.

Nevertheless it satisfied her cruel nature to maintain a suspicious silence when Maria declared her belief that her husband would return, and that there had been some mistake about the letters. And when Maria really found him waiting for her, as she had predicted, her sole comment to Fifine was :

"I *knew* that he loved me!"

He sprang to hand her from her carriage with such an air of devotion that Maria bridled and cleared her throat with such unctuous persistence that the nervous man at her side finally turned on her and hissed:

"Stop making that infernal noise if you don't want me to kill you!"

Maria started and looked at him in terror. It was the first time he had ever spoken roughly to her. She met a look in his eyes of such fierce hatred that for the first time it dawned upon her that nothing that had happened since her marriage was an accident. An icy hand seemed to clutch at her heart. What if the future held no hope?

Their state-rooms were four in all, but of these only Raoul's was on the promenade deck. The other three were on the deck below.

They simply looked at each other, this husband and wife, when they saw this arrangement. Maria dropped her eyes first. She was beginning to understand. She went down to her state-room, filled with flowers sent by her husband, and, entering, closed the door, nor did she emerge until the ship had been several hours at sea. Through all the excitement of sailing, of the interest of the shipping in the harbor, of the thought of a last view of America, Maria lay in her berth with her face to the wall, wondering, thinking, remembering, unravelling matters and piecing events together until she brought herself face to face with a resolve. She would seek an explanation with Raoul. This sickening suspense was killing her.

Although it was long after midnight, she slipped on a dressing-gown and went up to her husband's room. No one was there, not even his man. Raoul's things were all unpacked, his tortoise-shell brushes, inlaid with silver, his bath-robe, his steamer-coat, lined with

sable, his shirts, ties, and handkerchiefs. The woman's eyes roved hungrily over her husband's belongings. The smell of a cigarette was still in the air. She seized the pink wadded dressing-gown he had evidently just flung off, and buried her face in it, kissing the neck of it, where it had touched his flesh, and inhaling its sweetness with dry, gasping sobs. Her hands caressed its soft folds as if it were Raoul she embraced, until she heard the crackle of a letter in the inner pocket. She drew it out. It was in French. She turned it over, and the signature, "Lili," cured her passion as suddenly as if she had been turned to stone. She took it closer to the light and read it deliberately. While she was reading it her husband entered, so quietly that it did not disturb her. He sat down behind her and watched her, knowing quite well what letter she was reading and from whom.

Finally he scratched a match, and Maria turned with a scream. Raoul's hand did not even tremble as he sheltered the flame and lighted his cigarette. The glitter of his eyes as the match flared twice under the process fixed Maria with a cold horror as if she saw a ghost. Her jaw dropped, and she stared at him, trembling from head to foot. She did not doubt that he would kill her. She only wondered how he would do it.

Raoul flung down the match and leaned his head back, watching the smoke float lazily upward.

"She writes a clever letter, doesn't she?" he said.

The paper crackled under the nervous tightening of Maria's hand. He had broken the spell. Her fierce jealousy caused her to forget her fear of him. Under its influence Maria was always half insane.

"How dared she write such a letter to you?" she cried. "How dare you receive it!"

Raoul sat up and began to enjoy himself. This was the opportunity for a final explanation—a complete un-

derstanding. He exulted fiercely in his heart that it had come so soon.

Maria's " damnable conceit," as he termed it, in presuming to think that he loved her, could love her, or ever had loved her, had got on his nerves to the extent that (now that she had made the final settlements) his ruling passion, which had increased and grown bitter day by day and hour by hour, was to tell her how he hated her, to prove it to her beyond a doubt, to drive the iron into her miserable soul, twist it round and round, and then leave it there to rust and poison, and finally—God knew how he hoped—to kill !

To the supersensitive Frenchman good taste was his god. To be a connoisseur, an epicure, to know what and how and when to select—all these were in his blood. His mother had half wrecked her life to own the tapestries. In Raoul this trait took another turn. The bitterest taste in the whole nauseous dose of his marriage with the unspeakable American was the fear that some of her friends would share Maria's hallucination that he loved her. If every one could have known his sufferings, it would have removed their most poignant stings. He was safe in the hands of his own kind. The French knew and laughed. But his vanity was so small that he feared the opinion of even the despised Americans. He was constantly wondering if this or that woman believed Maria's fatuous statements. He determined, now that the battle was on, to make the breach so wide that no bridge could ever cross it. The separation, while not legal, could at least be made public.

" I have received many such letters, and written replies to each one," he said, deliberately. " We love each other—she and I."

Maria could hardly believe the evidence of her own senses. She had lived too long in Europe not to know the full import of that statement. She staggered back

against the wall and drew her hand across her eyes. At the sight of that little thin claw Raoul's own mutilation darted across his brain, adding fresh poison.

"Then why did you marry me?" she asked, stupidly.

With a horrible laugh the Frenchman sprang up.

"Did you think I *loved* you? *You?*" he cried. "Good God! Turn and look at yourself in that mirror. Look!"

He spun her around by the shoulder and turned on more light.

"Look at your eyes, your hair, your skin — and, oh God! your shape! Each more hideous than the other! Have you ever understood your own ugliness? And yet you dare to call yourself a woman—that most exquisite piece of Nature's handiwork! You call yourself a human being of the same gender of my Lili! You ape! How dare you?"

Maria only stared at him, too terror-stricken to answer or defend herself.

"See, see what *I* call a woman!" hissed the Frenchman, taking out a porcelain. "There is the woman I worship! Look at those lips and the fresh warm tints of her delicious flesh! See how that breast seems to glow and palpitate even in this cold presentment of her! See how those eyes mock and those lips invite! Imagine my head resting on that breast and those warm arms around me in love, and then look at the thing I have married! Look! Look at the two of you, side by side! And yet you have dared to believe that I loved *you!* Faugh! The mere thought of you makes me long to kill myself!"

If he had used more deliberation, Maria, in her jealousy, would have turned and fought him with every word-weapon at her command. But this furious torrent of abuse congested her brain. She heard every word, but she was deadened by the force and succession of the blows. She picked at her gown and tried to think.

"You have got all my money," she said, quietly.

"Yes, thanks to God and your stupidity. What a fool you were to give it to me!"

"I love you, that's why," said the woman.

The Frenchman came nearer and laid his hand on her arm.

"Yes, you love me, and I *hate* you for it. When you hate and avoid me, then we can be friends! We shall live under the same roof, but there shall never be any marriage between us. I have promised Lili that."

A momentary gleam of hate came into Maria's dull eyes. But it faded away. Then she said:

"Then the title will die out with you."

"How can I help that!" he cried, violently. "Who would care to inherit an empty title, with nothing to keep it up on? No, my friend. I changed my mind upon that subject of children when your father practically disinherited you. Your money will not last me many years. After that goes—"

"After that goes—" repeated Maria

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders.

"Who can tell? I need only to see five years ahead in order to be happy. A change of fortune—perhaps your death and more money by another marriage."

"You will not divorce me, then?" said Maria.

"No. My friends would criticise me if I did. It would be bad taste for a Frenchman to divorce a woman who had enriched him."

"I can make another will and leave the little I have kept for myself away from you," she said, narrowing her eyes at him shrewdly.

"Pardon me, my friend. You can do nothing of the sort."

He hesitated before finishing, and said:

"To whom would you leave it? To Rose, your beautiful, tall sister, whom I asked to marry me first and who refused me with such decision that it left me no alterna-

tive but your hideous self, or to Shirley and the clever little cat who will be his wife, who hates me with such delicious force!"

"To neither!" cried Maria, with a trace of her old spirit. "I meant to charity—or to your sister!"

Raoul breathed freely. If she had said to the Church, he would have winced, but Maria had been a Roman Catholic too short a time to understand the power of the Church.

"If you gave it to my sister, she would give it to me. If you tried to give it to charity—have you ever seen an American attempt to wrest anything from French law? Try it some time and see! Think, too, that now, in the eyes of the law, you are a Frenchwoman, and investigate what rights a married woman has over her property! It will open your eyes a little! Your property goes to your husband's family—not even back to your own. But by your courtesy"—he tapped the oilskin belt in which were her will and his valuable papers—"you have saved time, trouble, and expense by willing everything to me. A thousand thanks, my friend!"

He bent and swept Maria's hand with his mustache. He was in an ecstasy of malicious joy. Not since his marriage had he been so happy. His agile brain took in every smallest detail of the setting of the scene. He revelled in the thought that he was the principal actor in the farce. He could almost see the footlights and hear the applause which would billow across the orchestra when the curtain went down. This theatrical subconsciousness is what stages the Frenchman—nay, the whole French nation—for self-poised nations to gape and wonder and shrug at. The Frenchman always acts to the gallery. Its shrill whistles of approval are sweet music to his ear.

At his touch Maria quivered and her half-dazed senses came to life. Slowly her mind crept backward through

the benumbing moments. How did it all begin? Ah! Lili! And he loved her!

The eyes of the beautiful Alsacian looked into the dull eyes of the wife with mocking cruelty. Maria drew nearer to the porcelain. Raoul unconsciously moved as if in its defence. He feared that Maria would destroy it.

"I shall not break it," she said, taking it in her two hands and studying it jealously.

"You used to tell me that I was beautiful," she said, bridling. "I do not see that she is so *very* much better looking!"

The Frenchman leaped towards her. Would she *never* understand? Could he not make her see her hideousness—admit it—believe it?

"They were all lies I told you! I hated you from the moment I saw you at Vrianault. Eugénie will show you all the letters I wrote about you while I was in America investigating your father's wealth. I ridiculed you with all the force of my nature. Eugénie knows and agrees with me! *She* hates you, too! Your conceit is unbearable."

Maria's face paled a little at the idea that her one beautiful and perfect French friendship had been built on sand. Then she drew herself up. Raoul's vehemence had restored her balance. It was only his dignity and silence which had awed and frightened her.

"I do not believe it!" she answered, proudly. "Your sister admires me! I *know* she does! You are just trying to hurt my feelings because you are angry."

She thrust out her poor thin chest and drew her Japanese dressing-gown around her. Her shrunken arms looked like brown sticks as they emerged from those trying sleeves.

"I shall leave you," she announced, "until you are calm."

The Frenchman tottered to the bed and leaned on his

hands watching the jerky steps of his wife as she made her way in dignity to her own room.

Then he sank down in a disorganized heap, and the victory went with Maria.

How long he lay there he never knew. His man came to put him to bed, but he answered him " Not yet !" and he was left alone again. The mournful cry of the fog-horn finally aroused him. He shivered and looked at his watch. It was four o'clock. He stood debating whether to go to bed for the remainder of the night or to go on deck. He was in great terror of the sea, and fogs filled his nervous soul with untold anxieties. The creaking in the waist of the ship as the ocean greyhound ploughed her way through the waves and mist grew less pronounced. Evidently the speed was slackening. The mournful call of the fog-horn grew more frequent. It moaned out a warning to other ships, " Beware ! Beware !" The creaking sometimes ceased for a moment, and Raoul listened in terror for the pounding of the engines. They came with monotonous regularity, assuring him that the great ship had not stopped.

Oh, the terror of it, when the ships' noises die in the night and one's heart and the engines cease beating at the same time !

Finally Raoul could stand it no longer. He slid into his sable-lined coat, Maria's last gift, and went on deck. There was a dense fog—a wet, gray fog, with a smell of the salt sea in it. Raoul shivered even in his furs as he paced the deck. The fog condensed in drops on his mustache and dripped from the brim of his cap on his cheeks like tears. The fog-horn sounded continually. He imagined that he saw ghostly shapes of tall ships sailing by in wreaths of mist. He fancied he heard other fog-horns answering *La Bourgogne*.

Suddenly he started. Another fog-horn *was* answering. He turned cold and his teeth chattered. Again it

came. He heard hurried steps on the bridge above, and the captain shouted a hoarse order, which Raoul did not understand.

Whatever that order was, it came too late, for within five minutes of the time the stranger's fog-horn was heard, a giant black shape crashed into *La Bourgogne* amidships, tearing its way into the big steamer's heart, and then backed away again into the darkness like a shadow.

A grinding, roaring, splintering noise filled the air. There was the hiss of escaping steam, smoke from the disabled engines, the scraping of steel plates wrenched from their sockets, the pounding of loosened piston-rods, the angry roar and swish of the green water as it poured into the horrid rent in the steamer's side, but, above all, the screams and groans and prayers of the terrified passengers as they poured up the companion-way from the first cabin—the second cabin trampling them down, and the steerage plunging headlong through and over all.

In an instant it was pandemonium—a glimpse into hell itself.

At the first crash, with a shriek of terror, the Frenchmen flew for the life-boats. The crew poured up from the hold, a filthy, blackened, evil-looking set. Women half-clad, carrying babies and with children clinging to their skirts, rushed in terror from their state-rooms on the deck below.

Raoul with his gloved hands could do nothing towards launching the life-boat, but he kept near four of the crew who were freely cursing the passengers and swearing that they were going to save themselves first.

He was madly tying on his life-preserver when a lady said to him :

" Oh, sir, will you help me get these onto my children ? I have three !"

The strings of Raoul's were rotten and broke off short. With an oath he seized the ten-year-old child of the lady, who was feverishly wrapping up her two youngest and preparing them for the awful plunge.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" she found time to murmur.

With a short laugh Raoul tore off the child's life-preserver and fastened it on himself. The mother looked at him in terror.

"Oh, God!" she cried. "Can I believe my own eyes?"

For a moment she seemed to forget her children's peril in her astonishment. Then she huddled the two smaller ones into the arms of the boy and said:

"Stay here, just like that, without moving, until mamma runs back for another life-preserver. Remember, Jack! You are mother's man, and must stand by the babies!"

The boy swallowed hard, and planted his sturdy legs well apart to keep his balance, watching his mother as she flew, as if on wings, back to her cabin.

The four Frenchmen who were launching the boat saw Raoul's act, and it suited their humor. They nodded to him to come with them, and he sprang first into the life-boat. Just as they were about to cut the ropes the woman darted back, and, seizing her children, she cried to Jack to climb into the boat. The boy obeyed. They were Americans. They could not understand. There was a blow, and the child fell back against his mother—dead. In the crowd, no one noticed, no one saw. But the mother, with a shriek which rose above all the cries of terror and horrible noises of a sinking ship, knelt down by her boy, holding his little dead face against her own. An Englishman seized her in his arms.

"Give me the children, madam, and come to this boat. They will lower this one next."

He put them in, the mother staggering under the

weight of her dead child, but, in spite of his efforts, more members of the crew, including the very waiter who had served her at the table, flung the passengers out of the life-boat, launched it, and the two boat-loads pulled away amid English curses and imprecations.

At the first shock, Maria sprang out of bed and ran up to her husband's room. No one was there. She ran on deck just in time to see the first boat-load, containing her husband, pull away from the ship's side.

"Raoul! Raoul!" she screamed.

He looked up and imagined he saw her. He was certain he heard his name called.

"Is the steamer sure to sink?" he asked of the crew.

"It is only a question of minutes," said one of the engineers. "She is almost cut in two, and her fires went out half a second after she was struck."

They rowed away into the fog, and were lost to view by the unfortunates on deck.

As Maria turned away with a scream of, "My husband! He has saved himself and left me," an American, who was running by with two life-preservers, stopped short, even in that terrible moment, paralyzed by such a cry.

"Your husband has saved himself and left you?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," sobbed Maria. "I am the Marquise d'Auteuil."

"There is a raft launched on this side. See, you can reach it by this rope. Do you dare? It is certain death to remain here any longer. Look, the ship is turning now!"

"I don't dare!" screamed Maria.

The man drew on dog-skin gloves and sprang over the gunwale.

"Climb up here and hold around my waist—not my neck—you'd strangle me. Now, then, hold on tight, for we are going down this rope."

Maria did as she was bidden, and in an instant they were in the water. Oh, the coldness, the iciness of that freezing water! The terror of the dark, and the horror of the fog which shut off the sight and made the horror and the terror worse!

The Englishman saw the American go down the rope, and in a moment he had marshalled his little group, which now included five women. He bound their hands with strips of woollen torn from his great coat, their dresses, anything thick, and launched each one carefully. There were seven floating in life-preservers and holding to that one rope. The American swam to the raft and got on. A Frenchman flung him off. He clambered on again, and was again thrown off. He floated a moment, dazed by a cut over the eye from a boat-hook, and when he opened his eyes he saw that the women were struggling for a place on the raft. Then a French sailor in the uniform of *La Bourgogne* deliberately cut the rope to which they were clinging, while others, with oars, held the struggling women, one after another, under the water until they drowned and floated silently away.

When Maria saw the first woman struck she loosened her hold of the rope and gave herself up for dead.

Suddenly there was a loud splash near her in the darkness as of an object thrown violently into the water from a great height. Then came a steadily moving object, borne nearer and nearer, as if on the strokes of a mighty swimmer. Voices and cries came more faintly to her ears. Either she was moving away from the steamer or she was losing consciousness. Then she felt herself half lifted on one arm and borne on by slow, laborious strokes. The swimmer's heavy breathing became more and more stertorous.

A horrible, unearthly, hissing noise, as of a huge object being sucked down, partially revived her. A gi-

gantic whirlpool began to draw them around in great circles. The swimmer gave a groan and shook her.

" Exert yourself !" he panted. " Here is a boat. Can you get your hands up there ! Help, men ! Pull this woman aboard !"

Half a dozen faces peered over the side of the life-boat, to whose gunwale Maria's little brown claws clung tenaciously. Her strength came back with the hope of life. She looked up, and one of the faces peering down into hers was the face of her husband.

" Raoul !" she gasped.

The man drew back in horror. He looked at the bony, shriveled hands clutching the boat in a death-grip, and from them down to his own, maimed forever. He had thought Maria doomed.

" Look !" he said to the man next him, who held a boat-hook which had fresh blood-stains upon it. " That woman may sink us !"

There was a blow—a scream—bubbles on the water.

Raoul turned away his head. He disliked to witness pain.

The strong swimmer, the Englishman, who was swimming slowly after the boat, conserving his strength, saw and gnashed his teeth. The boat, feeling itself being dragged into the eddy made by the sudden sinking of the steamer, pulled rapidly away. He swam after it, holding to a piece of wreckage which floated past. It was a help.

Suddenly he heard voices—English voices. He quickened his strokes and found a capsized boat, which two men were trying to right. They finally managed it between them, and without an oar, and no prospects except to drift, they set themselves to rescue others. Their shouts drew one—two—three half-fainting swimmers, one of whom held Maria, unconscious but still alive.

They drifted thus for an hour before they noticed that

the boat was filling with water, which could not all have come from their dripping clothes. The Englishman made an examination. There was a leak, a bad one, and nothing, not even a hat, to bail with. The fog was lifting a little, but as yet there was no sign of rescue.

"*Surely* the ship that ran us down will lie to," said the Englishman.

"Unless she also went down," suggested another.

They heard a faint cry, and they shouted—encouragement, if it were a swimmer—hopefully, if it meant rescue.

One of the ship's stokers swam alongside, his swarthy low brow and close-set eyes making his face repulsive and cruel.

"They won't have me on the other boats," he panted in French. "For God's sake, take me on here!"

"We are sinking, ourselves," said the Englishman. "It would swamp us sooner if you came aboard. Can't you keep up by the tiller ropes?"

Then across the water came clearly to their ears the fog-horn of the *Cromartyshire*.

With a hideous oath the man shook the boat savagely. She shipped water and settled more.

"For God's sake, man, you are sinking us within sound of help! We won't desert you, but if you climb aboard we are lost!"

"Devils! Like the others!" he shouted, leaping out of the water. The boat rolled once—righted herself—rolled again, and then floated bottom upwards. The men could have saved themselves, but there were four women and so—

Just then the fog lifted and away on the horizon loomed the gaunt shape of the *Cromartyshire*, floating on her collision bulkhead, while against her black sides, like little brown specks, could be seen the eager movements of the rescuing crew.

CHAPTER XXVII

FOR weeks after the tragedy of the *Maine* not a day passed that Rose did not go to the embassy to beg news of the ambassador. Each day the war cloud in America grew bigger and the Continental press grew more bitter in its strictures on America. Paris journals were the most savage, the most denunciatory of all. They openly sympathized with Spain, and Americans in Paris began to notice that they were regarded with black looks by certain portions of the excitable Paris populace.

The first open demonstration came on the day when the Duchesse de Fleury held a bazar to raise money for the Spanish troops. It was enthusiastically attended, and on that day more than one inoffensive American woman was greeted in the streets of Paris by the epithet "*Rastaquouère!*"

To Mrs. Sharp's horror none were more eager in their efforts to make the affair a success than Lulu and Francine de Fleury.

"I can't understand the base ingratitude of those wretched little creatures," she said to Rose, who was calling with the Baronne Valencia. "They were always so ready to denounce Spain and praise America, and now see what they have done for this bazar! I cannot fathom such duplicity!"

"Then you will never understand Parisians, my dear Mrs. Sharp," said the baronne. "But, after all, I question whether it *is* duplicity. The French simply have no solid foundation of common-sense in their make-up.

Their brains are like straw. Touch the match of sentiment or superstition to them, and they are ablaze in a moment."

"I can't understand them," repeated poor Mrs. Sharp, making a grab for a moth miller which flew before her eye. "Such sweet, modest, sincere little girls as they seemed to me!"

Rose laughed.

"Tell her what you were just telling me," said Lida Schermerhorn, who, with Mrs. Gregory, had just come in.

"Why," said the baronne, "I think I would hardly call them all that. I took them down to Bellemaison last summer with my two boys and three or four other people, intending to keep them there a fortnight. But on the very first day I had them out in the break, and we were driving along the river-bank, when suddenly we came upon my two boys and a young Frenchman in swimming. I turned my attention to the view of the opposite meadows, but the sharp eyes of those young girls had spied the boys. In less time than it takes to tell it—in other words, in a jiffy—they had hopped out of the break, and had run screaming and laughing down the bank, tearing off their clothes as they ran. I was too horrified to go after them. I called, but they paid no attention. They kicked off their shoes, and with nothing on but their little thin chemises they plunged into the water like frolicsome children. But my two poor boys, when they saw them coming, suddenly became hideously aware of their shocking little bathing-trunks and of the eyes of their American mother on the bank, for they took to deep water like frightened seals, the girls swimming after them in mad pursuit. Finally Lulu caught my oldest boy, who afterwards told me that he let himself be caught because the current was getting too swift for a girl! The current got too swift for me that night; my

party was demoralized — went mad as it were — so I packed those girls back to Paris the next day, much to their disgust."

"Are those typical French girls?" asked Mrs. Sharp, with a red face.

"Yes and no. They are typical of young Parisiennes without restraint, I think. Few French girls could be trusted without surveillance."

"When my mother put me into school in Paris," said Miss Schermerhorn, "they made a great fuss about the havoc an American girl would create among innocent young French girls, who knew nothing of men. They said that the American girl always created for herself the atmosphere of men. So they made mamma pay extra because I was an American, and they made me swear not to speak about men to any pupil there under pain of dismissal. Well, I hadn't been there six hours before those girls had given me books with flirting signals that the boys in a school near-by understood, and there wasn't a night that there was not a tryst with some man held by those innocent little creatures, who knew more vileness in a day than an American could store up and remember in a year."

Captain Corcoran came to the door just then, and, seeing who were there, would have retreated if Rose had not called him in.

"Any more war news to-day, captain?" she asked.

He looked apprehensively around, but, seeing that nothing had reached their ears, he said no, and took a seat near Mrs. Gregory.

"Baronne, did you ever tell Mrs. Sharp about the breakfast you gave at Bellemaison when the Comte de Bec-Roche wished to form an alliance for his daughter with your son?"

"No, I never did."

"Tell me," said Mrs. Sharp.

Captain Corcoran beckoned Mrs. Gregory over to the window.

"Follow me into the little salon presently," he murmured.

"Well," said the baronne, "the Bec-Roche estate is ten miles up the river from Bellemaison, and lies between us and Vrianault, but the soil differs materially in that little river-belt, and, as we all raise vines in Touraine, the comte was for making sure that my wine would at least be the equal of his in case of a marriage; so after the breakfast he strolled into the gardens, and, producing a huge paper bag and a small trowel, he dug around the roots of a vine and filled the bag. He explained that he would, with my permission, take it home and analyze it!"

"To see if her dirt was as rich as his dirt!" cried Lida, with a scream of laughter.

Mrs. Gregory laid her hand on Rose's shoulder.

"Come, my darling," she said.

Rose looked up in surprise. Mrs. Gregory's face was very pale.

"You have had bad news," she said, "and it concerns *me*. Captain Corcoran told you. Tell me here—now! I am not afraid."

The others rose hastily.

"What is it?" gasped Lida.

Both girls leaned forward.

"Is it Shirley?" whispered Rose.

"No! no! dear!" cried Mrs. Gregory.

"War! Then war has been declared!"

"No, my poor child," began the baronne, who had learned the news of Captain Corcoran.

Rose turned towards her with white lips.

"Not—" She dared not mention Townshend's name before them all.

"This is cruel," said Marion Gregory. "I will tell you,

Rose, my darling! *La Bourgogne* has gone down off Sable Island. Only one woman saved, but that woman was not Maria!"

"Oh!" cried Rose, covering her lips with her hand and looking around at the sympathetic faces of her friends with startled eyes.

"A collision?" she asked.

"Yes. An awful collision. In the night. And the Marquis d'Auteuil was among the saved," said Captain Corcoran.

"I knew it. I felt it before you told me," moaned Rose. "Oh, my poor father! He admired my sister so!"

They took her home, telling her as gently as they could the bare facts, which were as yet all that had reached Paris. The whole truth was never known there. The French newspapers suppressed the disgrace of it.

When Rose reached home, her father and Shirley were in the library reading the cablegrams which were being repeated from the office of the *Herald*, together with scores of private messages from friends, containing the horrible details.

God pity those whose loved women were on that fated ship when the news of the way they perished came!

When Shirley saw the white faces of Rose and Lida at the door, and knew that they had heard, the big, tender-hearted fellow went and put his arms around them both. Lida began to weep, but Rose crept nearer to her father, who had a haggard look of distress on his face, which was not all grief for his lost daughter. Raoul saved! *Her* brother saved, and Maria one of those poor women, perhaps, whom the men—

He rose with a sigh which was almost a groan.

"Well, Rose!" he said. "Your sister—poor Maria—"

His voice broke and he turned away.

"And Raoul *saved!*" cried Lida, tearing herself away

from Shirley. She came across the room and faced Mr. Hollenden, who regarded her with interest.

"Mr. Hollenden, it isn't often I feel murderous, but if you or Shirley don't *kill* that man, by Jove! I'll do it myself!"

The old man's pale eyes glittered. He wrung the girl's hand in silence, and Shirley and Rose looked at each other, well knowing why he would not commit himself to vengeance.

"More despatches, monsieur!" said the footman, entering.

Shirley seized them.

"This one is from your brother-in-law, Lida. It says: 'Body of Marquise d'Auteuil recovered by *Cromartyshire*. Was under seat of capsized life-boat, held in death-grip by Englishman, name as yet unknown. Body was wrapped in coat of American sculptor, identified by papers in pockets.'"

He broke off abruptly, crumpling the despatch in his hand.

Rose and Lida burst into tears, and Shirley hastily put the cablegram into his father's hand. The rest of it read: "Maria's hands badly mutilated. Stockton!"

"Oh, God!" cried Mr. Hollenden, flinging the despatch into the fire. "My poor girl!"

"The other one is from the *Herald*, and says: '*Cromartyshire's* behavior superb. Savage in denunciation of rescued Frenchmen. Body of Marquise d'Auteuil recovered.'"

"There's another, Shirley. Read that."

"This is from the Associated Press. I cabled them to send news direct. It says: 'Marquis d'Auteuil on deck at time of collision, and first to reach life-boat. Gives graphic account of his rescue!'"

"Madame la Comtesse de Brissy!" announced the footman.

Rose started to her feet to utter a furious protest, but the Frenchwoman was too clever to risk a refusal by delay. She entered the room before her name was fairly announced. Her pale cheeks showed traces of tears, and her voice trembled with feeling. Mr. Hollenden's face crimsoned at a melting glance she flung him from her liquid eyes—so like her brother's—but she put him aside and held out her arms silently to Rose.

Afterwards Rose wondered how she ever had the nerve to do it, for the presence of the magnificent Frenchwoman was very compelling — almost overpowering; but all Rose's courage surged back into her heart at the sight of the sister of the coward who was first to reach the life-boat, and, drawing herself up to her full height, she brushed past Madame de Brissy, and left the room without a word of greeting, apology, or farewell.

The comtesse narrowed her eyes at them as Lida and Shirley followed suit, disappearing by another door. Her nostrils dilated and her hands clenched as she dropped them at her side. She nodded her head imperceptibly as she murmured:

"Good! It is war to the knife from now on! No more pretence!"

She turned away with her handkerchief to her eyes, and Mr. Hollenden followed her, taking her hand in his, all traces of his resentment melting away under her grief at Rose's rebuff.

"Forgive her, dear Mr. Hollenden. She did not intend to wound me. I came to show her a cablegram from my poor brother, which might tend to soften her just resentment. Here it is."

Mr. Hollenden was so touched by this noble generosity that he walked nervously up and down the floor, stamping a little now and then to ease his emotion. The comtesse grinned behind his back, and let her eyes rove

to the tapestries, four of the most valuable of which hung on the walls of the salon beyond.

Finally the mist cleared from Mr. Hollenden's eyes sufficiently to read: "Was only saved from being thrown overboard by rescuing crew by exhibiting maimed hands. RAOUL."

"True!" said Mr. Hollenden, suddenly. "I had forgotten that! Is this all you have heard?"

"All!" murmured the comtesse from the depths of her handkerchief.

She lied easily and well. Lying is a great gift.

She slipped her hand into her pocket to be sure that she had not also given him by accident the one saying, briefly: "I have seen Maria dead with my own eyes."

She was so exhilarated by the news that she was forced to keep her handkerchief before her face to hide the corners of her mouth, which curved upward in spite of her most valiant efforts. "Maria dead! That hideous monkey out of the way forever, and all her money Raoul's! Oh, God is good!" her thoughts ran. She could scarcely contain herself. It was a trial to be obliged to come to this house of mourning. She wanted to order a dinner in Madame Flamont's apartment, with champagne and cigarettes. This crowning success of all her schemes intoxicated her. Her feet tapped the polished floor impatiently. Her fingers twitched to snap themselves in the old man's face. He sat alluringly near. She felt maliciously mischievous. If she only dared to run those magnetic fingers of hers through his white hair and trail their tips down his cheek! Her spirits were becoming unruly. She must go. Oh, for a carnival, or a bal masqué, where she could give way to the exuberance of her excitement! She rose to go, with an air of disappointment which was not all feigned She really would have enjoyed a scene with Mr. Hol-

lenden. The time was ripe—he was quite ready to offer marriage to her, but she dared not bring on a crisis just now. In her heart she feared the influence of the clear-eyed American girl, who she felt despised her. If ever an opportunity came to torture Rose by making a fool of her father in the girl's presence, she would—

Just then she felt rather than saw that Rose was coming down the corridor to gain the stairs. Her shadow was faintly reflected in a large, gilt-framed mirror. The comtesse turned towards Mr. Hollenden with such a look of invitation in her eyes that quite swept him off his feet. He seized her in his arms, and she suffered his kisses with a willingness which went to his brain like wine. Through her half-closed eyes Rose's startled, white, reproachful face appeared for one moment in the mirror, then suddenly melted away.

Drawing herself partly away from the old man's arms, the Frenchwoman took his burning face between her two cool palms and murmured, caressingly :

" You forgive us ? You do not think *my* brother—the brother of the woman you hold in your arms—is a coward ?"

" God knows I did !" groaned the man.

The Frenchwoman, although horribly afraid one of those noiseless servants would appear at one of the doors at any moment, leaned forward and fluttered her lips against the American's in a trembling kiss.

" Do you now ?" she murmured, without moving.

" No ! No !" he cried, casting off allegiance to Rose and Shirley and his dead daughter, and allying himself finally to the cause of the sister whose brother had caused Maria's murder.

It seemed to the tortured man that his soul was rent in twain by that admission, but the lips of the comtesse were still against his own, and he felt that the reward was great. He was just about, in the innocence of his

heart, to speak of marriage to her, when Madame de Brissy, with a frightened whisper of " The servants !" broke away from his embrace and ran lightly down the corridor to the door with graceful composure.

Once inside the little brougham she had set up since Raoul's marriage, however, the Frenchwoman leaned her head back against the satin cushions, flung up her arms, and screamed with unrestrained laughter

CHAPTER XXVIII

TOWNSHEND sat before the fire in his apartment in the rue du Cherche Midi with his head between his lean brown hands. He was thinking, wondering, planning, discussing with himself the possibility of organizing a regiment among his cowboy friends in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

Ever since the destruction of the *Maine* he had felt quite convinced in his own mind that America would be obliged to declare war with Spain, and somewhat to his own surprise he felt his heart turning more and more towards his country in her hour of peril.

The surprise was occasioned by the fact that the treatment he had received at the hands of his American acquaintances, and, in many instances, even of his friends, when he had returned from prolonged stays in European capitals, and had tried to interest influential Americans in the problem of a more suitable representation of the country at foreign courts, had embittered him against his native land, and had finally been a factor in driving him to fix his residence abroad. It is a thankless task to try to educate a vainglorious American populace up to taking an interest in anything beyond the limit of their horizon, or to induce them to look at themselves in their proper relative value to other nations. But Townshend had originally been possessed of a fine enthusiasm of patriotism, and he had flung himself into the problem of making Americans realize their real weakness abroad, with a generous belief that he knew a sufficient number

of cultivated and enlightened persons, who had been over the ground and who knew, to help him. But, to his amazement, he discovered that few really understood and still fewer cared. Nothing daunted, he still persevered until the truth gradually dawned upon him that of the thousands of Americans who cross the ocean every year so few had ever succeeded in penetrating court circles, or of really being a factor in the society of the capitals where they had lived, that he could not gather enough together to count. Perhaps their wives had been presented at court and boasted a few isolated triumphs; but as to American men being reckoned among the number of those who belonged, and who were sought after, instead of being obliged to push their way by main force in order to get in at all—the instances were few and far between. Townshend could not concentrate their influence. The others were hide-bound, and only ridiculed him for his pains. The newspapers got hold of his idea to give every minister and ambassador to a foreign country the rank of major-general, in order to permit the use of the uniform at court functions, and all the cheap wit of cheap journalistic brains poured itself out upon his devoted head, making him, by pen and cartoon, so ridiculous that the sensitive man relinquished all attempts to carry out his patriotic plans and betook himself to Europe, literally hounded out of his native land because of his patriotism.

But time had taken away the poignant sting of all this, and, at the first sign his country showed of her need of her sons, Townshend wrote to the President, offering to raise a regiment of cowboys and sharp-shooters, and equip them at his own expense, also to present the government with a battery of light artillery.

The President, in a personal letter, his great heart touched by such generous patriotism from across the seas, accepted the light battery, conditionally, and beg-

ged Townshend to submit his plans of a regiment of rough riders more fully to the Secretary of War. If possible, the President assured him, the idea appealed to him personally as so novel and so excellent, that he would use his influence to have it carried out, not at Townshend's but at government expense.

Townshend had only that day received the letter, but his heart warmed towards his country in a manner to make him know that, if war were really declared, this selfish manner of displaying his loyalty by the mere expenditure of money which he would not miss could never satisfy him. He knew—in his heart he knew—that he himself must go. He had done little with his life thus far, chiefly because there had seemed no pressing need of exploration or scientific research, and no other opportunity to distinguish himself had presented itself. His ranch was his chief interest. There he was at his best—loved, respected, feared even, for Townshend was born to be a leader of men.

He rather laughed at his own enthusiasm when he found himself sitting up half the night to write personal letters to the War Department, detailing his plans, and then dictating to his secretary all day letters to his rough-and-ready friends of the great plains — expert shots, scouts, half-breed Indians, men with whom he had hunted, and, in one or two instances, for whom he had hunted, only to take them into his employ afterwards and to turn them from bad citizens into faithful friends and allies who would risk their lives for him or with him wherever he led.

For two months Townshend worked day and night, explaining and perfecting his plan of a regiment of these men. He was in constant and close communication with the administration, so much more so than the ambassador that Mr. Sharp was often forced to call upon Townshend for news. But the War Department at

Washington recognized that a keen brain and an iron nerve were directing this daring project, and they also knew that the man to lead them must be a man these men loved and feared. Therefore the Secretary of War formally offered the colonelcy of the regiment to Townshend, and gave him authority to come over and organize it.

But this honor Townshend declined. He wrote, however, suggesting as colonel the names of two men who had been associated with him in his life on the plains, either one of whom possessed the necessary qualities of leadership and whom his men would follow. Townshend asked for a captaincy in the regiment for himself, and promised to sail by the first steamer in order to assist in its organization.

Early the next morning, the morning of the 26th day of April, 1898, he mounted Minnehaha and started for his ride.

"You are going home, my girl," he said, patting her satin skin a moment before he sprang into the saddle. The handsome mare flung up her head as if she understood. Personally, Townshend had no doubt but that she did. "They have issued a call for one hundred and twenty-five thousand volunteers, and you and I must be the first two to answer that call. No matter if the ocean rolls between, we are still Americans, my girl, remember that!"

The mare nodded her handsome head and pawed the ground with her slim black hoof.

"I can't read what you have written there," said Townshend, laughing into her eyes. "I am no Kipling, but I know what you mean, and, by Jove! we'll do it, you and I! Steady! Now, then, we're off!"

As he reached the Place de la Concorde he reined her in a moment, something intangible urging him to give up the Bois and to go down to the boulevards. It was

just possible that some definite news might have reached Paris.

It seemed as if Paris that year was on the verge of a revolution. *L'affaire Dreyfus* was at its height. The crucifixion of this man had so rent society, politics, and the country at large, that hostesses at state functions finally laid a ban upon the whole subject, and guests were greeted with the words, politely spoken, with a smile to hide an iron command, "We will not discuss IT, if you please!"

Never in the history of the world—but this is true only because the telegraph and press now hold the world in their palm—have the whole civilized nations of the round globe taken so violent an interest in the fate of one man. Not even upon Napoleon in his prison at Elba were so many eyes bent, nor for him did so many hearts beat as for this hunted Jew, condemned to a living death, hounded to what all men realize is worse than death, solitary confinement, by the most malicious nation which boasts a civilization and a religion in the present day. In all the time of his imprisonment, tortured by devilishly false reports of his brave wife's infidelities; baited by schemes of suicide with tempting weapons always under his eyes; almost trapped once or twice by ingeniously-planned midnight surprises into firing upon his guard from sleepy terror, to give an excuse for shooting him in his miserable trap like a caught rat—this *one* man the personal victim of a nation whose skill in torture has reached perfection through generations of concentrated endeavor, kept insanity at bay that he might live to prove his innocence. Alone upon a dot of an island in the midst of the never-ending sea, solitary, forsaken, he was permitted but once to send a message out of his prison, and this message, a wave of the hand and the pregnant words: "My compliments to the world outside!"

But humanity was again speaking in his defence. Some—a few honest men—were yet left in France, who risked life and liberty in a daring attempt to right this wrong, and the country was seething like a boiling cauldron. America, although busy with her right hand in tearing the yoke of Spanish tyranny and oppression from the miserable and half-unworthy Cubans, yet found time to raise her left in warning to the French and to remind them that their Exposition was coming—that Exposition built, carried on, and wellnigh completed by foreign gold.

The American eagle might have screamed himself hoarse about the rights of this victim of French malignity, and the Gauls would still have been sipping their absinthe and smiling maliciously. But the one shrill note he screamed, warning them that, not their soul's salvation, but their *money* was at stake, and all France held its breath to listen. England, too, sounded her alarum, and laid her finger-tip upon Fashoda to show that the Anglo-Saxon was not sleeping, and again France hesitated and counted her sous, and thought greedily of the francs of the Exposition, and—wondered if Dreyfus were quite comfortable in his retreat on Devil's Island!

All this forms part of the reason why the financial and political Gaul showed his teeth at the Anglo-Saxon at that particular time with an intensity of feeling which the Anglo-Saxon even yet does not thoroughly understand.

Townshend had much to think of as the sorrel mare picked her dainty way in the rue de Rivoli like a pretty woman crossing a muddy street. He turned down the rue des Pyramides and came into the Avenue de l'Opéra. What a street it is! What a street *any* street in Paris would be in the early morning of a fine spring day, with Minnehaha's splendid speed and human intelligence for companionship!

As Townshend came nearer to the magnificence of the Opéra, which rose in majesty at the end of the avenue, he saw a small crowd gathered in front of Cook's, at No. 1 Place de l'Opéra.

But as he came nearer he saw that something serious was afoot. The crowd surged towards the door and struggled and pushed each other roughly in order to read the bulletin posted there.

War! The Declaration of War!

A babel of voices was raised in French and English. Minnehaha got her forefeet on the curb, and over the heads of the surging crowd, to his horror, Townshend saw Rose, in the very thick of it, while, quite unconcerned and blind to his mistress's danger, her groom was driving her dog-cart up and down, proud of the attention the chestnut always attracted.

Townshend anxiously tried to gain Rose's eye. The sight of her black gown wrung his heart, for in the two months which had elapsed since Maria's death he had not seen her often enough to become accustomed to it.

"Gentlemen!" he cried, in French. "You are crowding the ladies unmercifully. Remain where you are, I beg, and one of you read the message aloud. We are here. We will listen!"

An angry murmur from the Frenchmen, and cries of "Yes! Yes!" from the Americans were the only results as the Frenchmen struggled nearer. A few faint screams came from the women.

Townshend set his teeth and shook the reins. Minnehaha lowered her handsome head and nuzzled her way into the crowd, snorting her contempt of such behavior into men's necks and sneezing in their faces.

With exclamations of surprise and astonishment the crowd parted suddenly, and Minnehaha stopped with her satin nose against the bulletin-board on which America's declaration of war was posted, as if she knew that

she, too, must go with her master where that call for volunteers led.

Rose caught her by her bridle, and Townshend waved his hand.

"Silence!" he cried. "America has formally declared war with Spain. Those of you who wish to hear the exact words, listen. The rest will at least have the courtesy to allow us that privilege!"

"Bravo! Let the American girl, with the Stars and Stripes on her breast, read it aloud!" cried a voice.

"Read it, Rose!" said Townshend.

The girl trembled with pleasure at the note of command in his voice. Her cheeks flushed with excitement as her voice rang out in the martial words which brought an old and haughty nation into deadly combat with a young and courageous one, battling for a cause which never was and which never will be popular, but which brought the name of the young and unconsidered republic into the Senate Chamber of the Powers, forever afterwards to hold her place and her vote with princes and potentates of the Old World, and perhaps, with her mother, some day — who knows? — to rule them all!

As Rose turned away with shining eyes a breeze fluttered the tiny silk flag on her breast, and a titled Frenchwoman, who had been at the Duchesse de Briancourt's reception, snatched it off, tore it into shreds, and spat upon the fragments. To Townshend's amazement Rose sprang at her like a tigress. Without a word, Townshend leaned down and laid an iron hand on Rose's shoulder. The faces in the crowd looked black and ominous. He signalled to her groom, and the dog-cart drew up before the curb.

"Get in and drive away instantly," he whispered. "I will follow you."

He waited in the crowd, covering them with his eye

as with a pistol, until Rose turned the corner and was lost to view; then giving a quick word, Minnehaha stretched herself and with one leap was in the street, galloping after the chestnut as if she knew that she and her master must always follow where the chestnut's mistress led.

CHAPTER XXIX

ROSE was waiting for Townshend in front of the Madeleine.

"What were you going to do to her if I had let you go?" asked Townshend.

"I was going to scratch her eyes out!" cried Rose, fiercely. "Did you see her *spit* on the American flag?"

Tears filled her eyes.

"Why didn't you pull her hair!" suggested Townshend, laughing. "I think you would have killed her. I was quite frightened."

"You know you weren't," said Rose, smiling against her will. She was so angry and outraged that she did not wish to make light of it. Rose was fairly quivering to turn upon Townshend and demand why *he* did not go home to fight. The next moment she recoiled from the thought for fear of the reply he might make. Through forcing him to explain his position she might be compelled to give up his friendship forever. She might even be obliged never to see him again. No! She would not ask him! She hoped she might even sail for America before the subject was broached between them.

"Where are you going?" asked Townshend, presently.

"I don't know. Anywhere! Let's go over to Shirley's to breakfast!"

"A brilliant idea!" exclaimed Townshend. "I want to see Shirley, anyway."

They stopped and sent word up to Lida and Mrs. Gregory to follow them, and started.

" Shirley won't have enough for us to eat !" exclaimed Rose, pulling up suddenly.

" Well, let's stop and buy provisions. Here is Felix Potin quite near. Shirley is sure to have coffee—"

" Yes, and sugar and things like that. But get cream and eggs—there is a little dairy right next to—"

"And some ham ?"

" Yes, and a few onions ! I want to try an *omelette aux onions* that Marion was telling me of."

" Can you cook ?" asked Townshend, laughing.

" Can't I, just ?"

" I never had an *omelette aux onions* but once," said Townshend, " and that was at Santi's in Cairo. It was very good, I remember. I hope yours will be !" he added, anxiously.

" You shall help me cook it, so if it is bad I can blame you. It is such a comfort to have some one to blame !" said Rose, laughing.

" I wish I could always bear the blame for you, and the sorrow, and stand near when things go wrong with you," said Townshend, as they drew up at Shirley's door.

" Don't !" said Rose, tremulously.

She sprang down without his assistance and held out her hands to Minnehaha. The mare reached out her long neck and snuffed expectantly at Rose's pink palms.

" Give her this sugar, or she will be disappointed," said Townshend.

Minnehaha crunched the lumps in her strong white teeth, turning her velvet eyes on Rose with almost human knowledge.

" Oh, you beauty !" cried the girl, flinging her arms around the mare's neck. Townshend started forward.

" What's the matter ?" asked Rose.

" I didn't know what she might do. She is so nervous, she might have jumped and hurt you."

" What ! This *lady* hurt me ? Don't you know, you man, you ! that every woman knows when she is being admired and flattered, and can tell a caress from a strangle ?"

" I give up the problem," laughed Townshend, " when even my horse will take from you what she never would stand from me !"

" I am going to ride her some day," announced Rose, little thinking under what circumstances that time would come. " Has she ever carried a lady ?"

" Never ! But I am thoroughly convinced that you could ride her safely, and the first time, too !"

The noise of shrieks and screams of laughter came echoing down the empty stairway, as the two, laden with parcels, made their way to the third floor. They had avoided the subject of war by mutual consent, and each was glad to realize from the sounds above that the unwelcome topic would be pushed yet a little further into the future before they would be compelled to face its effect upon their own lives. As they opened the door this Babel assailed their ears with violence. The air was thick with smoke, and as Rose entered no less than twenty young fellows sprang to their feet and saluted her.

" Play the bugle-call for ' mess ' !" cried Rose, " and don't sit down on those eggs. We've come to breakfast with you !"

" Oh, I say, Captain Rose, you mustn't begin work so early in the morning ! Sit down and listen to Pat Duffy read ' Dooley on the Dreyfus Case ' !"

Duffy was a fellow-student of Shirley's at Julian's, but exceptionally gifted in helping Shirley to work out " that little thing of his own," as they gleefully called their military organization. He was red-headed and

freckled, but, in looking back over one's acquaintance with pleasant people, the nicest people one knows are so often red-headed and freckled that it ought to put a premium on freckles.

It was to Shirley Hollenden in Paris that some one sent a stray copy of the Chicago newspaper in which the now world-wide wit and satire of Mr. Martin Dooley first made its appearance, and from that time on the Irish philosopher had an eager and smoke-dried audience of students in the Latin Quarter, whose enthusiastic roars and howls of laughter often caused the *concierge* to suspect them to be up to deviltry of which they were—at such moments, at least—wholly innocent.

The news of Zola's interference and exile had just reached Mr. Dooley's ear, and this assemblage in the rue Bonaparte was in response to the slogan-call of Shirley, issued the evening before. Everybody in Paris was agitated over Zola's solemn arraignment and exile, and his impressive "J'accuse" speech was still ringing in the memory. Most of this little assemblage could repeat it word for word. They only waited for Mrs. Gregory and Lida Schermerhorn, before Pat Duffy laid aside his pipe, pulled his face down to normal, and began.

"'I see be the pa-apers,' said Mr. Dooley, 'that Colonel Hinnery, th' man that sint me frind Cap. Dhryfuss to th' cage, has moved on. I sup-pose they'll give th' Cap. a new thrile now.'

"'I hope they won't,' said Mr. Hennesy. 'I don't know annything about it, but I think he's guilty. He's a Jew.'

"'Well,' said Mr. Dooley, 'ye'er thoughts on this subject is intherestin', but not conclusive, as Dorsey said to th' Pollack that thought he cud lick him. Ye have a r-right to ye'er opinyon, an' ye'll hold it annyhow, whether ye have a r-right to it or not. Like most of ye'er

fellow-citizens, ye start impartial. Ye don't know annything about th' case. If ye knew annything, ye'd not have an opinyon wan way or th' other. They'se never been a matter come up in my time that th' American people was so sure about as they ar-re about th' Dhry-fuss case. They'se not a polisman in this counthry that can't tell ye jus' where Dhry-fuss was whin th' remains iv th' poor girl was found. That's because th' thrile was secret. If 'twas an open thrile, an' ye heerd th' tisti-mony, an' knew th' language, an' saw th' safe afther 'twas blown open, ye'd be puzzled, but ye'd not care a rush whether Dhry-fuss was naked in a cage or takin' tay with his uncle at th' Benny Brith Club.

" ' I havn't made up me mind whether th' Cap. done th' shootin' or not. He was certainly in th' neighborhood whin th' fire started, an' th' polis dug up quite a lot iv lead pipe in his back yard. But it's wan thing to suspect a man iv doin' a job an' another thing to prove that he didn't. Me frind Zola thinks he's innocint, an' he raised th' divvle at th' thrile. Whin th' judge come up on th' bench an' opined th' court, Zola was settin' down below with th' lawyers. " Let us proceed," says th' impartial an' fair-minded judge, " to th' thrile iv th' haynious monsther, Cap. Dhry-fuss," he says. Up jumps Zola, an' says he, in Frinch: " Jackuse," he says, which is a hell of a mane thing to say to anny man. An' they thrun him out.' "

At this juncture of the reading two of the boys slid off their seats and rolled to the wall, where they lay, convulsively clutching each other, while Duffy wiped off his glasses and went on:

" ' " Judge," says th' attorney f'r th' definse, " an' gentlemin iv th' jury," he says. " Ye're a liar," says th' judge. " Cap. ye're guilty an' ye know it," he says. " Th' decision iv th' Coort is that ye be put in a cage, an' sint to th' Divvle's own island f'r th' r-rest iv ye'er

life," he says. "Let us pro-ceed in hearin' iv th' tis-timony," he says. "Call all th' witnesses at wanst, an' lave thim have it out on th' flure," he says. Be this time Zola has come back, an' he jumps up an', says he, "Jackuse," he says. An' they thrun him out!

"'"Before we go anny farther," says th' lawyer f'r th' definse, "I wish to sarve notice that, whin this thrile is over, I intind," he says, "to wait outside," he says, "an' hammer th' honorable Coort into an omelet," he says. "With these few raymarks I will close," he says. "Th' Coort," says th' judge, "is always r-ready to defind th' honor iv France," he says; "an' if th' larned counsel will consint," he says, "to step up here f'r a minyit," he says, "th' Coort'll put a strangle hold on him that 'll not do him a bit iv good," he says. "Ah!" he says, "here's me ol' frind Pat th' Clam," he says. "Pat," he says, "what d'ye know about this case?" he says. "None iv ye'er business," says Pat. "Answered like a man an' a sojer," says th' Coort. "Jackuse" says Zola fr'm th' dureway. An' they thrun him out.'"

"Oh my! Oh my!" screamed Lida Schermerhorn, half drowned by the uncontrolled howls of laughter from the others. "I wonder if *any*body in America realizes how deadly funny this is to those of us who are over here in the thick of it?"

"And the French nation taking themselves so mortal seriously," wailed Rose, holding her hand against her side.

"Go on, Duffy. The next is the best of all," cried Shirley, pounding the fellow next him, who was getting hysterical.

"'"Call Col. Hinnery," says th' Coort! "He ray-fuses to answer." "Good. Th' case is now clear. Cap. forged th' will. Th' Coort will now adjourn f'r dools, an' all ladin' officers iv th' ar-rmy not in disgrace already will assimble in jail an' commit suicide," he says.

"Jackuse," says Zola, an' started f'r th' woods, pursued be his fellow-editors.

" 'That's all I know about th' Dhry-fuss case, an' that's all anny man knows. Ye didn't know as much, Hennesy, till I told ye. I don't know whether Cap. stole th' dog or not.

" 'What's he charged with?' Mr. Hennesy asked, in bewilderment.

" '" I'll niver tell ye," said Mr. Dooley. "It's too much to ask."

" '" Well, annyhow," said Mr. Hennesy, "he's guilty. Ye can bet on that!" '"

Townshend and Mrs. Gregory looked at each other as the score of young people screamed with laughter over this, the first ray of humor which had penetrated the whole hideous affair. To be sure, the French press had exhausted itself in cruel cartoons and biting, trenchant witticisms which cut like a razor's edge, but this point of view was wholly new, a thoroughly American jewel in spite of its Irish setting, and the little group of expatriates hailed it with an enthusiasm of appreciation which held in it also a trace of pathos and homesickness.

"What makes you look so solemn, Mr. Townshend?" asked Lida Schermerhorn, replacing her glasses, which always fell off when she laughed.

"There is something solemn to think about, if you only knew it," said Townshend.

"Not war?" asked Lida, her face sober in an instant.

Everybody held his breath to listen.

Townshend nodded, and clasped his knee, rocking back and forth on a painting-stool.

"Has war been declared? How do you know?" cried Jake Dunlevy."

"It is posted in front of Cook's. There was a crowd, and Miss Hollenden read it aloud. Now, then, let's have breakfast!"

Twenty paint-stained caps were flung into the air, and a shout as of forty voices split the air.

"Glory be!" roared Pat Duffy. "Now we can all go home and fight!"

"You'll go, Captain Rose, won't you?" asked Dunlevy, as Rose, covered by a long, tidy nurse's apron of her own making, broke eggs into the bowl in the boy's lap.

"Go? I should think I would! I'm going to the front, with the regiment. I'm going as a nurse!"

"Honest? Oh, I say! Boys! D'ye hear that! Shirley's sister is going as a nurse!"

"Hope I'll get wounded right off!" cried Carpenter. "I begin to feel it coming on now!"

"It's chronic heart trouble the lad has," said Duffy. "What's the 'first aid' for that complaint, Captain Rose?"

"Action!" cried Rose. "And hunger, and to be all night in the rain and to sleep in the trenches in momentary expectation of the enemy's fire."

The eager faces sobered under the girl's words.

"War isn't all pie," observed Dunlevy. "*I* know that!"

"Are you all going?" asked Rose, pausing, with a long-handled skillet in her hand to look around the room wistfully. "Really and truly, are you *all* going?"

"Every mother's son of us!" declared Shirley. "Every man in this room!"

Rose met Townshend's eye, and he smiled and nodded his head imperceptibly. The eager blood rushed into the girl's face, and a soft, dewy look came into her eyes, that look which, when a man sees it in the eyes of the woman he loves, gives him the feeling that it would be easy to die for her, if only to see that indescribable look once more.

To Townshend, Rose's eyes had always been the epit-

ome, the speaking embodiment of courage—that curiously misunderstood woman-courage which dares to face the enemy's fire from men's disapproving glances and other women's deadly tongues—that courage which he valued above every other trait in the feminine character, because it was so rare, so chivalrous, and, above all, because it sifted one's friends and enemies, weighing them afterwards so neatly that one could tell the coward and poltroon from the *fidus Achates*, whose approval meant a courage second to none. Therefore the very fact that Townshend valued Rose's courage above even her sweetness and beauty, and forgave her very obvious faults because of it, proved the bigness of the man's character, for it takes no small amount of man-courage to stand up to a woman like that, because there never is any telling where her next step will lead.

In Townshend's case it was not so much his courage which led him to love this characteristic in Rose as it was his utter unconsciousness of self. He never stopped to think, as men of smaller vanity might, that in owning himself her knight and coming to her rescue, no matter where she led, she might very possibly make him ridiculous in the eyes of others. He was not taking himself into account. He only knew that of all the other women he had admired, fancied, even been more warmly attracted to, he had in some intangible way felt their lack—that deep down in their hearts his aims and theirs were not one—that in case of storm and stress he did not dare to trust his soul into their keeping. Confidence in the calibre of their courage was just the one thing needful to turn his admiration into love ; but in his feeling for Rose this element of perfect trust was pre-eminent. Before he had ever looked into her face, while he listened to that conversation, with the screen between himself and her beauty, when she had so unconsciously revealed her nature, he had given his soul into her keeping, and

whether he ever won her or not, he firmly believed that she saw and understood, and that it was well with him.

The longer he knew Rose the more he realized that while as yet she had got off pretty well, considering some of the things she had dared, yet the time would come when she would need her knight. In such an emergency no brother, no matter how devoted, no father, no matter how powerful, would serve. It must be the man to whom she was the one woman in the world who could defend her, and if he ever prayed at all, Townshend would have prayed that when the time of her need came he might be at hand!

He watched her teaching those young fellows to cook and to sew on buttons, putting her whole mind to it as if nothing else in the world mattered just *now*, and he realized that everything Rose Hollenden did counted for something.

"If you are really going, you must be useful," she said. "There is nothing more helpless than a helpless soldier. It's all very well to be strong and kind and willing to carry the other fellow's gun on a long march, but to know how to mix eggs and milk and sugar into a little custard when he is too ill to eat pork, or to know how to make coffee, is something that you've all got to *learn*, if you want a certificate from *me!* Many are the times when a little squad of men, cut off from the rest, have got ill from not knowing how to cook the food they had."

"Oh, golly! I put the yolk into all those whites!" cried Dunlevy, looking up at Rose with real fright.

"It was very careless, but hold still and I'll dip it out with this spoon. They won't beat up as light, because I can't get all those little yellow streaks out, but it isn't spoiled. Now beat them."

Dunlevy beat with such force that those nearest him got a little in their faces.

"Hi, there, Dunlevy!" cried Carpenter, who was slicing onions and weeping over it, "that's no bass-drum you have there. Take back the eggs that thou gavest, and keep 'em all in the bowl."

"Now, then!" cried Rose. "Sit down, all of you! Lida, take the plates from under the stove and get ready. The skillet is just right. Did you see how much butter I put in, Mr. Dunlevy? Pour the eggs in—careful! Now, Mr. Carpenter, drop the onions in slowly while I stir—there! See it begin to cook? Go and sit down, for I'm going to serve you all from the skillet, to have it hot!"

"Oh, my word, Captain Rose! This beats everything you've done yet! And it's so easy, too!"

A chorus of groans and twenty pairs of eyes rolled up to the ceiling, and twenty pairs of hands crossed in ecstasy as they tasted Rose's *omelette aux onions!*

Rose looked down at them with a tenderness which shone in her soft eyes. They were going to war—these dear boys of hers—were giving up careers, going to risk health and life to follow the flag. They did not realize the seriousness of it. They looked forward to a battle as if it were a picnic of some new and exciting kind, and their eager faces were radiant with enthusiasm at the prospect.

Even Marion Gregory reached out and caught Rose's hand as she went by.

"What is it?" whispered Rose.

"Oh, Rose, my darling! I am afraid I can't speak of it without crying, but—but Oscar—"

"Oh, Marion! Not *really?*"

Marion nodded, her throat fluttering ominously

"His letters! You should read them! It's all—coming—back—"

"Now! Now! Be careful! Don't talk about it! As if you didn't know, you silly cat! that it was bound to end this way! Do you suppose that *any* man, hav-

ing once had you, could give you up, you big, beautiful thing! I could cry myself, I'm so happy over it, but I'll spill hot coffee on you if *you* do it!"

"Rose, there isn't any cream for the coffee," whispered Shirley in her ear. "Where's your purse? I'll skate down and get some."

"I brought some with me; it's on the window-sill. Go sit down again and I'll get it. But haven't you any money, Shirley?"

"Got two francs! I lent my last to Dunlevy last night. You know it cost a pile to get these Mausers."

"Well, why don't you wait to see if they aren't going to arm you with Mausers?"

"Townshend says they aren't! The government is going to arm the men with Springfield rifles, and use black powder!"

"Townshend!" repeated Rose. "What does *he* know about it, I'd like to know?"

"Know about it! Why, great Scott, Rose! Hasn't he *told* you? But of course he wouldn't! Even old Sharp got it unofficially from the War Department. Why, Townshend has presented the government with a light battery, and has submitted plans to the Secretary of War to organize a regiment of Rough Riders out of his cowboy friends, and he'll see to it that at least *one* regiment of volunteers is properly equipped, if he has to arm them himself! He is going to be a captain, and he's going to try to get me in as a lieutenant. If he can't make it, I'm going to enlist. He sails day after to-morrow from Cherbourg to recruit for it!"

"Sails!" cried Rose.

"Yes, sir-ree! Sails! Why, he's the Whole Thing, if you only knew it! It's so funny to me that you don't like him, Rose!"

Rose flashed a look into her brother's eyes.

"Did you say you wanted some cream?" she said, irrelevantly.

Shirley went and sat down by Lida.

"How's the coffee?" asked Dunlevy, anxiously. "*I* made it."

"Out of sight!"

"Best I ever tasted!"

Dunlevy flushed with pleasure. He was the genius of the group of students—the "Little Billee" of the Latin quarter, so slender and girlish-looking that it would take influence to get him admitted to the ranks of the army at all, but touched with that divine spark of celestial fire in his painting which we call genius.

Suddenly there was a howl of rage from Pat Duffy, who emerged from the pages of the London *Times* and slammed the paper down on the floor.

"Namer Gord, what's the matter, Pat?" asked Lida Schermerhorn.

"Oh, if you and Captain Rose weren't here, I could give you my unvarnished opinion of the New York correspondent of this blasted sheet!"

"What's he said *now?*" asked Shirley, bristling.

"Say? He brays for two columns here, purporting to tell England how Americans feel about the war, and lies seventeen to the dozen all the way through!"

"Is it any worse than what he prattled about yesterday?"

"No, just about like it, but I nearly had a hemorrhage over that!"

"Why don't they fire him?" growled Dunlevy.

"Because the English don't know whether they are being lied to or not when it comes to things American."

"And wouldn't care, if they did!" cried Shirley.

"I wonder if Americans know what he writes about them?" said Rose.

"Naw!" sneered Duffy.

"They'd beat him to a pulp if they did!"

"Well, *why* does the *Times* print what he writes?" cried Lida.

"It's a shame!" said Rose, suddenly. "Nobody will ever know how hard it has been for us over here to be patriotic over the preparations for this war. Not a foreign newspaper that I have read has given us so much as one pat on the head, or has taken us seriously, or believes us when we say that we don't want Cuba—we only want to free the Cubans. Even England, who ought to be our best friend, laughs in our faces when we declare it. That's because England judges everybody by herself. *She couldn't* do, and never did, such a thing. When she goes to war, it's always to grab some more territory—she's got the *habit*. And all she has to read about us is flavored to her taste by the New York correspondent of the representative paper of the world, so she never by any accident gets the real body of American people before her mind's eye. It has never been fairly stated by the foreign press that the dignified finding of the investigating committee of the *Maine* gave Spain the opportunity to apologize, offer proper payment, and accept our almost too courteous report with at least an equal courtesy. They don't give any of our side, or write of our long suffering and great provocation. They don't print a single line of the heart-rending state of affairs in Cuba that we would be a nation of demons if we could withstand. No! They read and believe the statements of the American correspondent of the Great and Only *Times!*"

A roar of rage greeted Rose's impassioned speech.

Duffy was actually crying with fury. Ah, nobody will ever know what those on the other side went through with during those anxious months!

"The worst of it is that the English don't *care* to hear the right of the thing! They aren't interested! They

never take us seriously—damn 'em!" he said, wiping his eyes. And even the girls did not reprove him for his emphasis.

"Tell you what," said Townshend, suddenly, "when we have licked the Spaniards, as we are going to do inside of six months—"

"Hurray!" shouted his hearers.

"And when we have shown them the strength of our navy—which not even the Americans suspect—and when we have taught even Germany what target-practice will do—all this is going to have one grand effect that will repay us for all the cost of the war."

"What's that?" cried Lida, a-quiver with excitement.

"It's going to make England respect us—a thing she has never yet dreamed of doing!"

A storm of applause, with stampings and clattering of glasses and plates, greeted Townshend's words.

"Even Carteret," said Shirley, "and he's the nicest Englishman *I* know, asked me if most of our journalism wasn't on the order of the yellow!"

"Never mind!" said Townshend. "We can afford to wait."

"To think of going back to America!" said Rose.

"Will your father go too?" asked Dunlevy.

"Of course he will! Why, Shirley and I are both going! He wouldn't stay over here alone!"

She glanced down at her black gown, and tears came into her eyes as she thought of poor Maria.

When it came time to go, Shirley decided to return with Rose and consult his father. He was very anxious to sail with Townshend on Saturday. The government had requisitioned the four ships of the American Line, and the North German Lloyd office was besieged with Americans wanting to get home before hostilities actually commenced.

"I wish you'd give me this horse, Rosie," said Shirley, as they flew along. "He is a wonder!"

"To ride, dear? Oh, I think I wouldn't take such a vicious beast. You may want to do some shooting, and it would take all of any one man's attention to ride 'Paris.' I'll willingly give him to you if you really want him."

"You're a darling girl, Rose! I *do* want him like thunder. He's the only horse I know of that's a match for Minnehaha."

"Take him and welcome, then," said Rose, blushing with pleasure under her brother's praise. "You ride so well, I oughtn't to be afraid."

Shirley grinned at her.

"You are a funny little mother, Rose! Here you are actually afraid to have me ride a horse that you have driven constantly for six months."

"Yes, I suppose I am silly," said Rose; "but oh, Shirley, let me love you all I want to! You're all I have in the world that's really mine!"

"Lord, Rose! Just let her go always when you feel the fit coming on. You can take me up in your lap and rock me to sleep if you want to!"

Rose laughed, but turned her head away to hide her quivering lips.

"I believe I'm really jealous of Lida," she said. "You are so awfully in love with her. You let *her* do all the little things for you that *I* used to do!"

"Oh, Rose! Oh, I say! What in the world—" he broke off, helplessly.

"Well, you *do!*"

"Jealous! My sister jealous of my— Oh, God! give me strength to live this down! And I thought I knew girls! Well, if ever I— Look here, Rose. You're such a brick! I'm blest if I know whether you are in earnest or not. I say, Rose! You're not

well. Do you have a roaring in your ears and a sinking feeling under your belt, and do you see spots on the sun ?"

" I'm perfectly well. You can make fun of me if you like, but how would you like it, if you were a girl, to see your brother, whom you perfectly worshipped, go all to pieces over another girl and forget *you !*" cried Rose, pulling up the chestnut in front of their hôtel with such a jerk that he tossed his head excitedly.

Shirley saw that Rose meant what she said. He held up his arms and gave her a great hug as he swung her down.

" You are the best and dearest sister a fellow ever had, and the very prettiest girl I know ! There now ! And I love you no end, and I'm coming in to kiss you this very minute !"

" Oh, Shirley, really, do you mean all that ?"

" Cross my heart ! And that isn't half I do mean !"

He watched her fly up the steps, smiling brilliantly down on him from the doorway.

" I'm a selfish dog," he said to himself. " I *have* neglected her ; but she's so brave, I didn't stop to think—hang it all ! Fellows ought to make love to their sisters *more !*"

Together Rose and Shirley found their father in the library, little suspecting that the first battle of the Spanish-American war was to be fought by them then and there.

CHAPTER XXX

HER kisses had produced an effect so admirably adapted to her plans that the Comtesse de Brissy early decided to use them more freely. The result was that for two months Mr. Hollenden's brain had reeled. The comtesse had not been so amused for years as she was by the progress and methods of the American's courtship. It was so delightfully pastoral. The marquise, her mother, haughtily disapproved of the length of time Eugénie permitted the affair to continue, but, not daring to admit that this exquisite deviltry was in the least interesting, Eugénie bought her mother's complaisance by declaring that to precipitate a demand for the tapestries now would ruin everything.

Affairs were in a critical state all around. Raoul remained in London at his sister's imperious command. In spite of her ascendency over Mr. Hollenden, she never felt sure that one of those hare-brained Americans would not shoot him down at sight. If Shirley didn't, she dreaded that Rose would—she even feared Lida Schermerhorn! The eyes of the American girls spoke to her quaking soul of both courage and revenge. Therefore she filled her letters with warnings, and the Frenchman's native prudence completed her work. He wore deep mourning for Maria, and his distinguished appearance, with his conspicuous band of black on the sleeve of his light coat, got him much attention at the places where his mourning permitted him to attend. He sold some of the jewels which he recovered on Maria's

body, and cursed his folly in not attempting to save her jewel-box. The famous pearls lay at the bottom of the sea. But Eugénie was deeply touched when Raoul's gratitude prompted him to send her a diamond brooch of Maria's—reset so that the Hollenden family might not recognize the stones.

Mr. Hollenden, much to her annoyance, confined his gifts to flowers, and it required several carefully planned conversations and artful hints before he discovered that jewels would be accepted. The comtesse was often quite exhausted by the fatigue of the artlessness she forced herself to practise upon the American.

Sometimes, after he had got away from her, he almost suspected her of being clever. He thought it marvellous that she never quite permitted him to declare himself. He made numberless attempts, but each time, although her fingers fairly tingled for the tapestries, the comtesse pushed his declaration a little further into the future. She had learned, through a mischievous fellow-student of Shirley's at Julian's, of the famous military studio, and of Rose's enthusiasm over it. It was just possible, the Frenchwoman shrewdly thought, that Rose might go to America with her brother when war was declared. If only she, Madame de Brissy, could have Mr. Hollenden in Paris alone! But she dreaded the influence of Rose and Shirley.

Therefore the Comtesse de Brissy in Paris was awaiting the action of the American Congress at Washington with an eagerness for which there was no outward reason. The declaration of war would decide things. It would show her where she stood.

She took care to discover that love of country had no part in Mr. Hollenden's make-up, and her discussion of American politics and of America's policy did not tend to create any. Her witty tongue flung many a gibe which lingered in Mr. Hollenden's memory, and which

he repeated at the club as his own, until some of the Americans would have nothing to do with him.

This relaxation was the only one she permitted herself, for her usual subject for a display of wit flew quite over Mr. Hollenden's head. The Frenchwoman decided that to be courted by an American was, in a sense, decidedly stupid. She never knew that sometimes Mr. Hollenden caught her hidden meaning, but repudiated his interpretation, and blamed his man's mind for the intruding thought. To this Western man, who had spent his young manhood in mining camps, where a woman was so rare as to be almost a goddess, the idea of a *lady* stooping to unchastity was beyond his ken. It was the one sentimental spot in the man's hard, shrewd nature. His one charity consisted in discrediting in his own mind newspaper accounts of fashionable women who were indiscreet. But as he never by any chance spoke of it—nor even thought of it without a blush—it was not to be wondered at that even a Frenchwoman as clever as the Comtesse de Brissy should overlook it entirely. She laid his non-recognition of her double meanings to stupidity or ignorance, and amused herself by teaching this man what it was to find himself in love with a woman of a deeply emotional nature, who had known what love was, and who now used this fatal knowledge to the one end of maddening an inoffensive old man. Her arts were numberless, her caprices fascinating, her magnetism dizzying. She jumped to extremes of heat and cold with a suddenness which set his brain to spinning. He never knew whether she would receive him or not. One moment she was in his arms, pleading for his kisses, which, in his bewilderment, he wondered why she took the trouble to demand, he was so eager to bestow them. The next moment, in tears, she begged him to leave her, never to return. He feebly blinked his eyes at her breath-

less changes. But she gave him something to think about.

Never had Mr. Hollenden met such a woman. In all his life he had only known two, and those two he had married. He did not care for women, and it had always been a sort of dumb surprise to him that he had married at all. He was thoroughly a man's man, but that sort of a man is often just the one to prove putty in the hands of the worst of women.

So when the Comtesse de Brissy went out of her way to captivate Mr. Hollenden, she found her victory almost too easy. She enslaved him. His belief in her was pathetic.

To him, therefore, rent as he was by conflicting emotions, the news of the declaration of war came with a shock. He was so certain that Shirley would go that he was not surprised when the two presented themselves at the library door, on the day of the breakfast in the studio. He knew what it portended.

"Well," he said, balancing on his heels and toes before the fire, with his hands clasped behind him—"well, they've done it at last! The fools! The whole of Cuba isn't worth the death of one American soldier!"

"That may be true," said Shirley, "but, now that America has declared war, there is only one thing for Americans to do, and that is to stand by the government. The time for unfavorable criticism is over."

His father tilted his face downward and surveyed him over the top of his glasses.

"Are you reproving your father, young man?"

"Oh no, sir! I was just expressing my opinion. But if men who hold views like yours put them into print, you will find that the war will be prolonged—that's all. It happened so in the Civil War."

"Well, in the Civil War I held the same views," said Mr. Hollenden, "and I expressed them!"

Then," said Shirley, undutifully, with his face growing very red, " you were what they called a ' copperhead !' "

" So I was," said Mr. Hollenden, amiably. " But I've been called worse names than that without being hurt by them, and I was too smart to go and be shot at. When I was drafted I bought a substitute and sent him. He was killed. Then they wanted me so badly that they drafted me again, but business was pretty brisk just then, and I hadn't got any warmer love for cold steel, so I bought another soldier and sent him. *He* died of fever. That's the way *I* fight. I'd have been dead twice if I'd gone myself !"

" Well, sir, I hope you have no objection to *my* going," said Shirley, hastily, in order to break off the narrative.

" I have every objection, but I shall put no obstacle in your way. I shall only impose one condition, and that is that if you live through it you will come back to us here. I have been separated from my family long enough. I want you and Lida to live near us."

" But, father !" cried Rose, " aren't *you*—aren't we all going home ?"

" Home ? Where do you call home ?"

" Why—America ! Always ! *Surely, dear* father, you will take me back when my country is at war ?"

" I shall do nothing of the sort. Shirley is a man and can do as he pleases, but I want you here with me—for several reasons."

He paused suddenly, fearing that he had gone too far. He glanced down and colored. Rose looked at him with such reproach in her eyes that he coughed nervously.

" Father," she said, tremblingly, " what are those reasons ? Surely you don't mean—yes ! let me speak !—you can't mean that—the—the—"

" I mean this," said Mr. Hollenden, straightening him-

self and tucking his thumb into the armhole of his waistcoat—"you might as well face it— I am going to marry the Comtesse de Brissy !"

There was a breathless silence between his two listeners. In spite of everything, Rose had not really credited her own fears. She thought the comtesse was only playing with Mr. Hollenden.

" Not really, father ?" said she, in a low tone. " Has she said so ?"

" Why not ?" demanded Mr. Hollenden, evading the question. Yet it irritated him.

" I'll tell you why not !" said Shirley, facing his father. "Because her brother killed—murdered—your daughter! That's ' why not ' !"

" Nothing of the sort !" said Mr. Hollenden, reddening angrily. " I was afraid of it at first, I will confess, but I told you of the cablegram the comtesse showed me. Surely you have not forgotten the state of Raoul's hands. He could have saved no one !"

" He could have died trying," said Shirley, shortly. "He does well to skulk in London, for I'll shoot him the first time I lay my eyes on him, and he knows it !"

" Then you would be hanged for unjustifiable homicide," said Mr. Hollenden, coolly, " for you couldn't prove one single thing that you suspect, and, in addition, you would find yourself in the clutches of French law."

Shirley looked at his father with ill-disguised contempt. He had Southern blood in his veins.

" Your code of honor is a singular one, sir," he said. " Have you no intention of avenging Maria's death ?"

" You two are just like your mother. *She* was high-strung and hifalutin, and always wanted me to—"

" Father !" cried Rose, " you *must* spare my mother's memory, at least in my hearing ! It is shame enough that you can wish to put that wicked Frenchwoman in her place. With your own hand you have torn down the

ideal I had built of you. Please let me worship her as I remember her—in peace."

"Rose, I have never spoken sharply to you in my life—have I? But if you speak disrespectfully of the woman who—it may sound foolish to you young people—who think of me as an old, white-haired man—but I believe if ever a woman was worshipped, she is, and by me. You must respect her."

Rose was silent. She felt that her father was being deceived and played with.

"Do you mind telling me when you are to marry her?" she said, at last.

"Whenever she will. The sooner the better!"

"You are quite decided?"

"Quite!"

"Then I hope you will not blame me too bitterly for what I have decided," said Rose. "I will not live in the same house with her, nor even remain to see her installed in my mother's place. I shall go to America with Shirley."

"Go to America with Shirley?" stammered Mr. Hollenden. "What for? Are *you* going to war, too?"

"Yes, I'm going to do just that. I'm going as a nurse. I made up my mind the night the *Maine* was blown up, but I have not spoken of it until today."

"You're going to leave me—to desert me—if I marry the comtesse?" repeated her father.

"I am," said Rose, quietly.

"And you, Shirley? You won't come back to Paris to live after you are married?"

Shirley shook his head.

"I couldn't, father," he said.

Mr. Hollenden looked from one to the other, then his eyes fell and he studied the rug thoughtfully.

"You make it very hard for me," he said. "You

make me choose between my children and—my wife. But I choose—my wife."

"I am sorry, dear father, for your sake," said Rose, earnestly. "I am afraid she is too much like her brother and too thoroughly French for you to be happy with her. But if anything goes wrong with you—ever!—and you want me, I'll come. The only thing I ask of you is to realize how Shirley and I feel. It isn't that we simply don't like her—we *hate* her! We couldn't breathe in the same house with her. Forgive me, but I *had* to tell you. And then—the war and all my friends going—I must go too. It's in my blood!"

"Is Lida going?" asked Mr. Hollenden. "I'm very fond of that girl."

"Yes. Lida and Marion and Mr. Townshend—"

"Townshend?"

"Yes, and twenty boys from Julian's, and Shirley and I!" cried Rose.

"When?" asked Mr. Hollenden.

"On Saturday from Cherbourg, on the North German Lloyd!"

CHAPTER XXXI

THEY sailed on the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*—"Billy the Grocer," as Lida Schermerhorn disrespectfully named the ship—and a more eager, enthusiastic little band never turned their faces homeward.

To Townshend's intense chagrin, Rose's changed demeanor towards him, her evident approval and the sudden friendliness of her manner, led him to understand the truth—or rather enough of the truth and enough of the other thing to make him completely wretched. He thought she must have doubted his courage and that the fact that he was proving himself no coward explained her changed attitude. The thought stung him to the quick. He realized what many another brave man has realized—that courage cannot be boasted of. He could not go to her and say, "I have faced death in many fashions. I have known what it was to defend myself against Indians who slapped in my face long-haired scalps, still wet with the blood of murdered women. I have risked my life more than once in defence of a friend, yet you have held yourself away from me and denied me your faith because you doubted my physical courage."

In his overwhelming mortification he quite overlooked the fact that she knew of his duel, fought to avenge her. He lost himself in the same gulf of despair which has temporarily received at one time or another all the lovers in the world who are worthy of the name.

Rose, on her side, was deeply wounded by his neglect,

so that when the *Kaiser Wilhelm* landed her passengers in Hoboken the misunderstanding between these two was progressing nicely.

Oscar Gregory, who held a captaincy in the First Illinois Volunteers, then encamped at Springfield, had, with the utmost difficulty, got forty-eight hours' leave; but as this was not sufficient time to reach New York and return, he telegraphed his wife that he would meet her in Pittsburg; and Marion, with a face full of a supreme happiness, left New York by the first train, without even going to an hotel.

New York was gay with bunting. The Americans saw more flags floating from windows in Jersey City alone than they ever had seen in all their lives before.

As Mr. Hollenden had leased his house before leaving America, no home was open to receive Rose and Shirley.

"But I'm so glad to get back to God's country that even the Waldorf seems like home to me," said Rose.

The newspapers had taken care to herald their arrival, so that their rooms were filled with flowers—none from Townshend.

Rose took the most of hers and put them in Shirley's room. She sent two boxes to Lida's sister, Mrs. Stockton, who had sent word by her maid that she was too ill to meet her sister. Lida grinned a little at Rose's face when she proposed this, then turned her back for fear that Rose would catch her at it.

"Rose," said Shirley, coming in with his arms full of newspapers, "I've got bad news for you and Lida. I suspected it from the papers the pilot brought aboard, but these others confirm it. There are three thousand more applications for women to go as nurses than are needed or can possibly be used."

Rose and Lida stared at him in silence. The news was incredible—heart-breaking.

"Won't they let us go if we go at our own expense?" asked Rose.

"No. More nurses than they need would only be in the way."

"More than they need!" cried Rose, derisively. "When did an army *ever* have more nurses than it needed? I won't give up! I *will* go! I'll pull wires! I'll use influence! I'll go to Washington and sit on the steps of the War Department until they give in! And I'll never let up until the war is over, and I see the returning troops with my own eyes!"

"With all your regular-army relatives and friends, Rose, I should think you would get anything you want in Washington," said Lida.

"That shows that you never belonged to the regulars!" cried Rose. "The army officers have less influence with the War Department than a policeman. They *never* ask favors! If they did, they wouldn't get them!"

"Why, who ever heard of such a thing?" cried Lida, indignantly. "*Why?*"

"Because everything is politics—except the army. The volunteers will get all the glory and all the newspaper notices and all the fat plums. The regulars are hired to be killed, and their bravery is only their duty! You don't often get any prizes for doing your duty!" said Rose, with the bitterness of the political injustice done the regulars in times past still rankling in her heart.

"Then why not make use of politics?" cried Lida, stoutly. "Let's go down to Washington. I know Senator Callender's private secretary, Jack Carusi. Let's telephone him, and ask if it would do any good to go down. If not, he could tell us what to do."

"Lida!" cried Rose, lifting her off her feet in a smothering hug. "You can *have* Shirley! You are the

cleverest thing that ever happened! Go down this minute and telephone!"

"Well, by Jove!" cried Shirley. "If you two girls don't beat the— I say, Rose, I'll bet you a Krag-Jorgensen against a Mauser that you and Lida get to the front whether Townshend and I do or not!"

"Done!" said Rose. "And I'll pay up, too!"

"You bet you will! A fellow doesn't have to let you off from paying your bets!"

"He says—" panted Lida, bursting into the room half an hour later, "to come by all means. He asked me if we had any 'infloo-ence,' and I said, 'Loads!' (I thought we could scratch up some after we got there.) He says Washington is jam-full of people who want something, and two more won't make any difference. He promised to speak to Senator Callender about it, and said he'd give us the time of our lives if we came. I didn't have my purse with me, so I had it put on your bill—it cost two dollars to talk five minutes!"

"It's two o'clock," said Rose, "and the 'Congressional Limited' leaves at three. We'll be on that train."

"Oh, I say!" laughed Shirley. "Don't you want some luncheon?"

"We'll get it on the train!"

"Two reporters to see you, mademoiselle," said her maid, coming to the door.

"I can't see them, Marie; I'm too busy. You see them, Shirley. Tell them that I am very glad to be at home, and that I like America much better than France, and that we had a delightful voyage, and that I heartily approve of the war. If they want to know anything else say—yes, you think I do. Tell them 'yes' to everything! Marie, you needn't unpack our bags, and when the trunks come you bring all my clothes and Miss Schermerhorn's and follow us to Washington. Mr. Shirley will give you any further orders. Hurry! We

leave the hotel in fifteen minutes. Let me have all your American money, Shirley, and you get some more. You must get this French money changed."

"Rose, I want you to write to me often from Cuba," said Shirley, "for we soldiers will be awfully lonesome up here while you girls are at the front!"

"Lida," cried Rose, suddenly, "what will your sister say? You ought to go to see her. Perhaps we'd better wait until the next train."

"*Jamais de la vie!*" cried Lida. "I telephoned her while I was about it—and put *that* on your bill, too, by the way—and found that she was only mad, not hurt. She wasn't too ill to answer the telephone, so if she had been dying to see her little milliner sister, she could have come to the pier. You know I haven't told her I was engaged to Shirley yet. If I had, she'd have met me with a military escort and a brass band."

"Perhaps she wouldn't," said Shirley, suddenly, "if she knew that we had left poor father in the power of as clever and wicked a woman as even Paris can boast. If the comtesse marries father, she is perfectly capable of persuading him to disinherit us. And as to cutting off our allowance — that would be her first move."

"Never mind, Shirley dear," said Lida, twinkling. "We would go into the millinery business—we three. I'd make the hats, you could be a floor-walker or sell them, and Rose could be the model we'd try them on. We'd ruin New York in six weeks if people bought the hats Rose tried on 'just to give you an idea of the way it looks,' as we say in the trade!"

"Lida, you goose!" said Rose, blushing. Then, turning to Shirley, she said: "*I* think she would go at it quite the other way about. She wants to keep us away from father while she wrecks him. She'll persuade him to *double* our allowance. You see if she

doesn't. She thinks that if he cuts us off with a shilling, we'd come trailing back to Paris."

"Well, but we wouldn't," said Shirley. "I'd enlist and support both you girls and myself handsomely on thirteen dollars a month. Anything you could save out of that you could have to spend freely, without even accounting to me for it!"

"The carriage, mademoiselle," said Marie, at the door.

"Oh, oh, oh! Isn't it lovely to be at home again!" cried Lida, as they drove down Fifth Avenue. "Shirley, please telegraph Jack Carusi to meet us at the train. He asked me to."

"I can't get used to it quite yet," murmured Rose, "that we are back in a country where we may accept men's escort again."

"Poor dear!" said Lida. "Never mind, you'll get over it when you see Jack. He's not like the wild beasts we've had to put up with for the last year Jack is the result of American girls' training. He's so tame he'll eat out of your hand."

"I'm more afraid of his sister, Miss Ella Carusi. She has written a book, with a heroine so impossibly clever that she *begins* conversation with repartee," said Shirley.

"Isn't it heavenly not to bother with checking trunks! But mind you send them on to-night, Shirley, so that they will be waiting for us in the morning," said Rose, as they hurried down the platform.

"Look at the grin of that fat old colored porter," said Lida, as he beckoned to them. "He wants to make us think he is holding the train especially for us, which means a double fee. Yes, yes, can't you see that we are *coming?*"

They really had not a moment to spare. The porter snatched the bags from Marie, ducked in response to his fee, Shirley waved his hat, and the "Congressional

Limited," one of the most perfect trains in the country, pulled slowly out of the station, gathering speed and momentum, and then rushed away southward towards the capital.

Jack Carusi, one of the smartest beaux of Washington, met them at the station, and fell so violently in love with Rose the moment he saw her that he proposed to her within the week, was refused, and returned to his allegiance to his syndicate of other girls with quite a chastened air of resignation.

But during the week that he neglected Senator Callender's correspondence in order to serve Rose Hollenden and Lida Schermerhorn, he was of much use to them.

" First," he told them, " you must see your senator."

" I'd rather see the President," said Rose, abruptly, " and ask him."

Carusi's hair rose.

" You don't mean to say," gasped the Washingtonian, " that you would actually bother the President with so small a request as this !"

" Bother anybody !" said Lida, stoutly, " if I could get what I want by it."

" ' So small a request,' " repeated Rose. " Do you know, Mr. Carusi, that every nurse who goes to the front takes her life in her hands just as much as a soldier in the trenches ? Bullets are not the only dangers of war. I wish they were."

" Then you really are serious in your wish to become nurses ?"

Rose and Lida looked at each other. Lida reddened.

" Look here, Jack Carusi. You have frittered your life away at pink teas until you ought to wear skirts and stays and be done with it. I thought you meant it when you promised to help ; but we can do without you. We will go alone !"

Carusi threw his head back and roared.

" No, you won't ! I'll do everything I can. We'll go to the Senate first and send our cards to Senator Burlington."

The senator came out of the Senate chamber, rubbing his glasses nervously with a white silk handkerchief. His manner said, impatiently, " Well, well, what can I do for you ?"

Carusi introduced them and stated their errand. The senator said, " Hum ! Hum !" Then he put on his glasses and looked at Rose.

" You want to go as nurses ? *You ?* But you know that is not in my department. You must see the Secretary of War, or, better still, the Surgeon-General."

" I'd rather see the President," said Rose, quietly. " I thought perhaps you would go with us."

" Go with you !" gasped Senator Burlington, swept off his feet by the delicate impertinence of it all. " When ?"

" Now !" said Rose, coming closer to him and laying her hand on the old man's arm.

" But—but," he stuttered, " they are just about to vote on the annexation of Hawaii. They may begin the roll-call at any moment. I can't leave *now !*"

" Yes, you can," said Rose. " They will be all of two hours—oh ! I know the Visitors' Gallery !—and in less than that time we could do it. Besides, do you think we don't know that you are paired ? See, we have good horses, and we won't spare them. It is just the right time to see the President. He will receive us, I *know.*"

" I'm not so sure about that," muttered the senator. " Well, well, let me just go and have a look about and see if I can be spared."

" Not over that doorstep do you go !" said Rose, smiling. " You may go to the door and *look* in, if you like, but I would never get you again if I let you go now !"

Senator Burlington looked at her again, then burst out laughing and led the way out.

"It's of no use! I'll go with you! I'll desert my country in her hour of need, and I'll show you to the President as my excuse!"

Lida tiptoed after them in silent fits of laughter.

"Oh, my! Oh, my!" she whispered to Carusi. "When *Rose* gets kittenish and goes in for flirting with old men, it's time for *me* to sit in a chimney-corner and knit gray socks. I *never* saw her do such a thing before. She ought to marry a congressman from the West and stump the State, kissing the babies and corrupting the male vote by those eyes of hers! Oh, Lor'! *Look* at the senator!"

"Now, Senator Burlington," said Rose, as she raised her pink parasol, which shed a soft rose-colored light over her fresh, clear-tinted skin, "we must make these precious two hours of yours count. You have deserted your country in a shameless manner, and if you fail with your errand your conscience will cry, 'Treason!' If you succeed, it will cry, 'Patriot!' You must turn rebellion into revolution. You must use all your influence."

"Be quite rude if necessary!" supplemented Lida, cheerfully.

The senator looked in a bewildered manner from one to the other of the faces opposite as the carriage swept out from under the *porte-cochère* of the Capitol and wound down that serpentine drive which spreads all of beautiful Washington out before one like a panorama. He did not know just how to take them.

"You would not have me coerce the President, would you?"

"Wouldn't we, just? That is, if we couldn't get what we want any other way."

"No, no," said Rose, pacifically, as they entered the White House. "Just persuade the President to receive us. That's all *I* ask."

Senator Burlington wrote something on his card, and in a few moments they were ushered into the presence of the Chief Executive of the United States. The color fluttered up into the girls' faces, and their hearts beat with excitement.

The President rose to receive them, and Senator Burlington stated their errand with refreshing brevity.

The President smiled. His face was pale from the great strain he was undergoing, and his deep-set eyes looked anxious and tired.

" Mr. President," said Rose, " we have been living in Paris for a year, and we have travelled five thousand miles in order to get home in time to enlist as nurses, but before we could get here *all* the places were taken. It isn't fair ! I am the daughter of five generations of soldiers on my mother's side, and I want to go to the front just as much as my brother does. *He* telegraphed me this morning that he has been promised a second lieutenancy in the Rough Riders."

" Mr. Townshend's ?" said the President, raising his eyes suddenly and darting one of his keen glances at the girl.

" Yes—Mr. Townshend's. And if he goes, why can't *we ? Please* don't say that you have all the nurses you need ! What's the use of being President if you can't do as you like ?"

The President drew a long sigh and shook his head.

" Are you sure you are competent ?" he asked, surveying the Paris-clad girls dubiously, in spite of their eager faces. One of the penalties of great beauty is that it is always suspected of being a fool.

" I understand nursing, although I am not—" began Rose, but Lida cut in with—

" Tell him about the studio, Rose. Mr. President, have we your permission to tell you how we have been training our little squad of students in her brother's

atelier in the Latin quarter ever since the *Maine* was blown up?"

"You have been doing what?" said the President.

"My father set my poor brother Shirley to studying art, because he wished to keep him out of the army," explained Rose. "But after the destruction of the *Maine* we felt sure that war would be declared, so he recruited a company from among the students, and equipped them with Mausers (because, of course, you will discard the old Springfields and use smokeless powder), and Miss Schermerhorn and I taught them how to cook and sew, and the 'first aid to the wounded.' Twenty of them came over on the same ship with us to enlist."

The President looked keenly at Rose.

"Are you the young girl who compelled the foreign diplomats to salute the flag at the ambassador's reception?" he asked.

"Yes, she is!" cried Lida, eagerly. "They had already commenced to hiss a little. They *felt* like hissing, but Rose *made* them salute the flag of the *Maine!* Nobody else would have dared!"

"Lida!" said Rose, blushing painfully.

"I wanted him to know!" maintained Lida, stoutly.

"Believe me, I am very glad to know," said the President, earnestly. "It was a dangerous thing to attempt, because the reception was official."

"I never thought of that," said Rose, simply. "I never thought of anything except that Spain had insulted the flag, and it seemed to me that some of those representatives of other nations looked as if they were glad of it, although they wouldn't have dared to say so. There was only one thing to do, and that was to make them salute, with all outward respect, the flag that one country had dishonored. It seemed a simple thing. I didn't realize until afterwards that I oughtn't to have done it."

"But you ought to have done it, Miss Hollenden," said

Senator Burlington. "The President, in his official position, perhaps does not feel at liberty to express himself as freely upon the subject as he would enjoy doing, but I know I am expressing his sentiments when I say that I am glad you dared to do a thing like that."

"So brave that even yet you do not know how brave it was," said the President, kindly. "You must let me thank you personally, if it is not too late."

Deeply embarrassed, Rose scarcely knew where to look as the President offered her his hand.

"Then may we go?" asked Lida, eagerly, anxious not to lose this opportunity of pressing her advantage home.

"Are you sure you know what you are asking? Are you both strong enough? And are you trained nurses?"

"We do know what we are asking, and we are perfectly strong and well. We are not trained nurses in the sense that we have graduated from any training-school, but we have studied harder than you would believe we could, and we are so eager to go that I am sure we shall prove competent. At any rate, we are going," said Rose.

"You are going, are you?" said the President, smiling.

"Yes," said Rose, lifting her honest gray eyes to his fearlessly. "We are going officially, if you will appoint us. If not, we shall fit up a yacht and go as private nurses."

The President and Senator Burlington glanced at each other involuntarily.

"You shall go," said the President, "if I have any influence with the War Department. Call upon the Surgeon-General and tell him from me—"

"Won't you just write it?" suggested Rose, sweetly, drawing the paper up before him.

The President darted another keen glance at her from under his thick brows. Then he smiled and scratched a few words on his official paper, signed and handed it to Rose.

"Oh, Mr. President," cried the girl, taking his hand in both hers, "you have made me so happy!"

"It is a blessed country, Miss Hollenden, where the women are as patriotic as the men," said the President, bowing to his little group of visitors. "I owe more thanks to you for the services you have already rendered than you can possibly owe to me."

Lida gave a little frightened laugh as they bowed themselves out.

"How impressive he was!" she whispered. "I was more thrilled by the look in his eyes than when I was presented to the German Emperor."

"It is because he feels the terrible responsibility of this war," said Rose, sadly. Then she added, more briskly:

"Now, dear Senator Burlington, we are going to get you back to the Capitol in time to witness the vote on Hawaii. I intended it all the time as a reward of merit." She whispered a few magic words to the negro driver and looked critically at the horses.

The senator laughed.

"I shall not be surprised if you do," he said. "After seeing you get the President's signature in less time than the Senate and Congress rolled together could do it, I shall not be surprised at anything."

"Wasn't he kind?" said Rose.

"Rose, he'll kill those horses!" cried Lida. "He's beating them to a jelly. Where's all your humanity towards dumb brutes?"

"These horses are perfectly fresh, and it won't hurt them to run a bit."

"I feel like the chariot race in *Ben-Hur!*" cried Lida, as the carriage whizzed by other carriages, the horses galloping and people staring after it in open-mouthed amazement. Senator Burlington and Carusi began to look nervous.

"It's all right," Rose assured them. "I know this driver and he knows his horses."

The carriage clattered up the asphalt road like a fire-engine, and the driver reined them up under the *porte-cochère* with a flourish.

"Come!" cried Rose, "I want to see if you're in time."

Each girl took the senator's arm and hurried the white-haired old man up the steps, through the labyrinth of corridors, and back to the door of the Senate Chamber.

"After we leave you safely, we're going to the War Department," said Rose.

"Oh, you'll get your appointment," panted the senator.

They thanked him and said good-bye in hurried whispers at the door of the Senate Chamber. The roll was in the act of being called and the Visitors' Gallery was packed.

"Hurry and go in," whispered Rose. "They're just beginning the B's."

The senator tottered to his seat and dropped into it with a sigh of exhaustion.

"Where in the devil have you been?" asked one of the ayes. "Didn't you realize that we were going to vote *at last?*"

Senator Burlington nodded.

"Then why did you stay out so long? I've had pages dragging the river for your body."

"I've been to the White House," murmured the senator. "I went in a balloon and came back on a fire-engine. I've been bewitched by two sirens and seen a miracle performed, and if you've got any ice I wish you'd put it on my head."

"But you won't see such a sight as the vote on Hawaii—" began his friend.

"Damn Hawaii!" said the senator. "I wish you'd seen those girls."

CHAPTER XXXII

IT was the morning of July 1st. The sun was pouring down its blazing heat upon the hospital tents where three nurses, Rose, Lida, and little Lena Marot, who had contrived to be sent where Marion Gregory wished to come and could not, stood clutching one another's hands and listening to the booming of the cannon which told that the battle had begun.

Of the three only Lena had had experience. She had been transferred from the hospital at Siboney, or, rather, she had transferred herself. Whether she ever had permission or not, no one ever knew, and no one ever will know. But there she was, preparing for the reception of the wounded, which even now were being "sent to the rear."

To Rose and Lida it seemed as if every shot would end their lives then and there, for Townshend and Shirley were both up there somewhere, at the front, probably, if they could get there, in that awful place whose name strikes such terror to women's hearts, "on the firing-line."

The surgeons and Red Cross assistants of this temporary field hospital had all started up towards the battlefield to meet the ambulance and stretchers halfway. The three nurses moved about restlessly, arranging their scanty stores of medicines and implements, and raging at the *Olivette*, the hospital-ship, rocking easily in the harbor off Siboney, with everything on board that the land hospitals needed and couldn't get. The

Red Cross ship *State of Texas* was anchored in Santiago Harbor, and would supply all immediate needs, but the main hospital supplies might as well have been in Manila Bay as where they were—red-taped and balked of their mission by wretched mismanagement.

Neither Rose nor Lida were supposed to be at the field hospital—women were not allowed there—and the main Red Cross hospital was over a mile away; but Rose always carried with her the magic paper bearing the President's signature, fortunately not addressed to any one, but asking that the bearer be given, in the name of the President, anything she wished. Its effect once or twice had been electrical. She got supplies which no one else could get; she foraged like a pirate for others, yet now, in this, her first real experience, she had less to work with than any one. She inspected her poor little supplies with tears of impotent anguish in her eyes. The ice was packed more carefully even than the medicines, and moved often, to be kept out of the sun's fierce rays. The hospitals were two tents, hastily set up and equipped, and affording only an apology for shelter.

The suspense was agonizing. Suddenly Rose, who was using the field-glasses, gave a cry.

"What is it? What can you see?" cried Lida, snatching the glasses. "Is it Shirley?"

"No. Minnehaha, and—riderless!" gasped Rose.

"Pooh!" cried Lida. "Mr. Townshend has been obliged to turn her loose, and the pretty thing has come home—that's all. He told me he knew he should have to!"

"Did he? Did he really, Lida? You are not saying this simply to encourage me?"

"On my honor he did! And Shirley never even tried to take Paris with him. *I'm* glad they dismounted the regiment. I know that brute of yours would have killed Shirley."

Minnehaha came along at an easy canter, and Rose ran out to meet her.

"No sugar for you now, my girl," she said, as the mare snuffed expectantly at her hand. "Tell me," she whispered, putting her arms around the mare's neck—"tell me, is it all right with your master? You wouldn't run away and leave him to die, would you? I am sure you wouldn't. Come over here and stand in the shade and let me take your saddle off. Oh, Lida! did you hear that bullet? It went right by my head."

"There must be sharpshooters in the trees," said Lida, anxiously. "Come back into the tent. Oh, look! There come a row of stretchers!"

The first wounded man to be brought into the field hospital at San Juan was Pat Duffy, wounded horribly in the leg. He smiled faintly as he saw Rose and Lida bending over him.

"Captain Rose, I got this practising under your orders," he whispered. "I stopped to give a 'first aid' to a chap, and a shrapnel burst while I was doing it and nipped me. It killed two men. Wasn't I lucky?"

"Oh, Pat! Dear boy! How brave of you! But where is the regiment?"

"Right in front," whispered Pat, flushing with pride, "and Townshend's in front of the regiment."

Great drops of sweat stood on his brow, and he set his teeth to keep down the groans which his shattered leg wrung from him. In a few moments chloroform had mercifully eased his pain, and while under its influence the poor boy's leg was amputated, leaving him so weak from loss of blood that Rose held her finger on his pulse until the awful arrivals of others and the imperative demands of the surgeons called her to the harrowing task she had deliberately set herself to do.

News of the battle came in with the wounded as the

day progressed, until finally came word, late in the afternoon,

"They've begun to charge the hill!"

To Lena and Lida Schermerhorn this sounded terrible enough, but to Rose it sounded ominous. She knew that they had practically no artillery—a few Gatlings firing black powder—and that to charge without the backing of big guns was simple suicide.

"It's the Rough Riders who are charging, then!" she cried to the surgeon at whose right hand she was working. "The regulars would never be ordered to do such a thing."

"There'll be no one prouder than you if they succeed," he answered her quietly. "It may not be wise, but it is brave. And no one there is braver than your brother."

Rose flushed hotly. She had not been thinking of Shirley when she spoke so impetuously.

"All the men are brave," she said. And then she noticed that there was a very tall officer, with bloodstains on his khaki uniform, whom the men were carrying very carefully, and she saw that they were looking at her. Her sleeves were rolled up and her bare arms streaked with blood. Her nerves, perhaps, were all unstrung from her terrible day's work, but, from whatever reason it was, when she staggered to her feet and saw that it was Shirley they were carrying she lost her control and gave one terrible scream.

"Oh, my brother!" she cried, flinging herself upon his breast.

Lida rushed across from the other tent, her trembling knees almost giving way beneath her. She tore Rose backwards roughly.

"Do you want to kill him?" she demanded, fiercely. "He isn't dead. His heart is beating."

She cut away his uniform as she talked in jerks.

"It's only a flesh wound in his shoulder and a broken

collar-bone. And—he's overcome by the heat. Get some ice, quick."

But Rose was sobbing bitterly. Lida looked up at her, her white lips twitching painfully.

"Have you lost your nerve?" she demanded, huskily. "Surely if I can bear it, you can. He's more to me than he is to you!"

"No such thing," said Rose, wiping away the tears. "He is my brother, and he is only your—"

"To be sure. He's only going to be *my* husband. Merely a relation by marriage. But don't let's let him die while we fight about him. *Will* you have the goodness to get some ice and call the surgeon?"

"Good! Nothing at all serious," said Dr. Corey, cheerfully, when he had examined him. "But he has come closer to having a sunstroke than I should care to. One of you stay with him until I need you both, and the other come with me."

The hospital tents were full to running over long before night. Wounded men lay outside on stretchers and cots when there were any, or on blankets, but most of them crawled to the shade of trees and lay there hours, uncomplaining, unmurmuring, waiting patiently until their turn came. A sad, halting procession of those wounded but able to walk or crawl crept on from the temporary hospital to the Red Cross, over a mile of wretched, muddy, uneven ground, the stronger helping the weaker and often lending a hand with a stretcher bearing a case too desperate to be operated on in the field, when every step of the brave bearers was an agony unspeakable. Who shall ever tell of the nobility of these wounded? Of their patience? Their courage? Their fortitude? To those nurses in the rear it seemed that to stand up and be shot at, with the excitement of shouting and shooting back, was a distinct joy compared to the silent agony which followed being "sent to the rear,"

where the fever and the thirst and the agony which racked them the long night through were so bitterly hard to bear.

All night the surgeons and nurses worked without a moment's rest. The nurses' clean cotton gowns of the morning were splashed and dyed with human blood, and clung limply to their figures. The insects attracted by the lights as the grim work went ceaselessly on maddened the sufferers and increased the delirium of the fever-stricken. It was Rose who finally pressed the least wounded into the service of keeping their comrades unmolested by waving branches of palms. It was a touching sight, but so eager were they to help that she had to warn them to keep down their exertions or they would open their own wounds.

In the sweet, cool dawn of another tropical day she slipped out of the stifling tents and made her way through the lines of wounded lying on the ground. Most of them slept. Occasionally a moan disturbed their slumber. Sometimes one spoke to her. Finally one tall trooper, a famous Arizona broncho-buster, caught at her skirt as she was passing, and she stooped over him.

"What is it? Can I do anything for you?" she said, wiping his brow and pushing his ha r out of his eyes.

"Thank you," he whispered. "My mother used to do that. It felt good. No. Nothing for me. But there's a chap up there that you've all skipped. He's crawled so far away I can't hear him any more. But I know he needs you. Go find him."

Rose started up instantly. Then she turned back and, kneeling down, she smoothed the wounded man's tumbled blanket, unfastened his cartridge-belt, tucked it under a pile of leaves for a pillow, and, dipping a handkerchief into her canteen, she laid it on his forehead.

"Oh, my God!" groaned the poor fellow in a painful whisper. "If you only knew how good that felt! A

man is too big a fool to know how to make himself comfortable. That cartridge-belt has been bothering me all night."

"Hush! Don't try to talk. You'll make your fever worse. You must be suffering horribly."

The man smiled feebly.

"Would you mind—" he began. "Would you mind putting your hand against my lips, so—so's I could kiss it?" he said, humbly.

Rose granted his request with a willingness which she never would have dreamed of withholding.

The man's lips moved again.

"What did you say?" asked Rose, bending nearer.

"I said, 'Thank you,'" he murmured with difficulty. She looked more closely at him. Was he falling asleep? She felt for his heart. It had ceased to beat.

With a cry she started up. Oh, how awful it all was!

Tears streamed down her face as she knelt down again and took his pocketbook and papers. She found his name on an envelope which looked as if it might have been written in Townshend's hand, and pinned it to his sleeve. Then she went on, hunting for the one who had crawled away to die alone.

When she came upon him, a slender, boyish figure, he was lying face downward, and at first she thought him dead. But he started when she laid her hand on him, and to her horror she saw that it was Dunlevy. His left hand was dug deep into the soft earth, where he had thrust it in his agony; the other arm was soaked in blood.

He was too weak to speak. He only looked at her and tried to smile.

Rose hastily spread her canteen and nursing things at her side, and, sitting down, she drew the lad up into her arms until his head rested on her breast. She held him thus for a moment before she even tried to help him.

It seemed as if she knew that he must be warmed back to life by a human being, after lying all night under the trees, dying by inches. She smoothed his forehead and pressed her cheek against his until he drew a long, sobbing breath.

"Not a word!" she whispered. "I'm not going to leave you again. I'll call for help, and I'll stand by you while your arm is dressed, so that it won't hurt a bit. I'm just going to wipe your face with this cool cloth—so—and then you are to have a drink of water, and then I'm going to keep my arms around you until I hear somebody coming."

The boy smiled faintly, but the lines of pain smoothed themselves out under the comfort of her voice, and when Dr. Corey, missing her, came to hunt her up, he found the lad asleep.

"He'll have to lose the arm, I'm sure," she murmured. "Can't you administer the chloroform here, so that he need not know? He is sure to faint if we try to move him. Look at his uniform."

The sound of cannon came booming over the hill, signalling the dawn of another battle. Rose shuddered.

"I feel that this day will bring something terrible into my own life," she said to the surgeon.

"You have had no sleep. No wonder you are nervous. Oh, yes, the poor arm must go."

"And it is his right arm—the hand he paints with. He was the genius of the students in Paris. What a loss! Oh, poor boy!" murmured Rose.

"He will learn to use the other if the genius is in his soul," said the surgeon.

"Dr. Corey," panted a Red Cross assistant, coming upon a run, "come at once if you can. Captain Townshend has just been brought in badly wounded. They fired on the stretcher he was in, and killed one of the men,

and wounded the captain a second time. It may be mortal."

"I will come instantly," said the doctor. "Help me to carry this lad. He is under the influence of chloroform."

Rose quietly gathered up the things they had been using, and followed them. By the way her heart felt, she knew that if Townshend died she had got her death-blow. She did not hurry—she rather crept behind Dr. Corey. She wanted him to see Townshend first and tell her the worst.

But as they drew near the tents, and she remembered that they were full, and she saw a group around a stretcher, and knew that there lay the man she loved, the life came back to her.

She pushed her way through, and knelt down beside him. His face was covered, for the wound was just over his eyes.

She took his hand before them all.

"Sterling," she whispered in his ear.

He started.

"Is that you, Rose?"

"Yes."

"Will you stand by me?"

"I will never leave you. I promise you that, and *you* know what it means."

For reply he pressed the hand which held his in such a life-giving clasp.

And then, when it was all over, and the surgeon had dressed the wound in Townshend's side, Dr. Corey sent them all away except Rose, and to Rose and Townshend he broke the news that in all probability he would recover, but he would be—blind. There was just one chance. If constant applications of powdered ice could be kept on his eyes, the fever might be reduced and the inflammation allayed.

"For that reason, I give him into your charge. If you let that bandage get warm *once*, his eyesight will be gone, and nothing—no operation—can bring it back. Will you be careful? You need attend no one else except Captain Townshend."

"Oh, but she must," murmured Townshend. "I cannot have a nurse all to myself."

"I promised poor Dunlevy," said Rose. "Have them put side by side."

They carried Townshend over to a thicket of trees, where only yesterday Rose had picketed Minnehaha. The Red Cross had sent up six cots and another tent with fresh supplies, so that the day began better than yesterday. Rose's two patients were isolated from the rest, and when Dunlevy fell asleep Rose sat down on the ground and Townshend held out his hand blindly.

Rose took it in both of hers.

"This ends all my hope—all my life," he said. "I can only go on loving you, never asking you to love me."

"Before you finish, I have something to tell you," said Rose, "and that is that I love you with all my heart and soul, and I am so happy to know that you will get well, that you aren't killed, as I was afraid you would be, that you aren't going to die, that it seems as if life had nothing more to offer me. Don't, oh, for *God's* sake, don't tear off that bandage!"

"I want to see your face when you say that. It isn't enough to hear your voice."

"Do you want to break my heart? I am going to save your eyesight, and here you nearly tore that blessed ice bandage off that is going to work the miracle. I won't speak another word if you don't promise not to frighten me again."

"I promise," said the man, humbly. "But, oh, won't you say it all over again?"

"I'll say it all the rest of the day, if you will lie still.

Eternity isn't long enough to tell you all that is in my heart. Just hear those shots. Doesn't it seem to you that they sound very near ?"

" I forgot to tell you. We pushed our lines so far forward that some of the Spanish sharpshooters in the trees couldn't get away, so they are still concealed up there and are between us and the regiment. Tell Dr. Corey to send the stretchers well out into the open when he can."

Rose put fresh ice in the bandage before she went.

" They don't need me," she panted, as she ran back. " They have sent up some nurses from the Red Cross. But they can't find Lena. That girl has been a perfect wonder in the way she has worked."

" There was one of my troopers wounded yesterday of whom her name always reminds me, because English George, your friend the coachman, told me of him that night. His name is Jim Bobeen. I wonder if he got through."

" Was he one of your men ? Oh, I am so glad I did what I could for him ! The poor fellow died this morning just at dawn. I have his papers in my pocket. I *thought* the envelope I pinned to his sleeve looked like your handwriting."

" Dead ! Poor fellow ! A worse man and a better man never lived ! Were you with him when he died ?"

" Yes, quite accidentally. I went the rounds just at dawn, and he spoke to me about Dunlevy, and told me to hunt for him. Then I made him a little more comfortable and he asked to kiss my hand, and while he was thanking me he died."

" Put that same dear hand where I can kiss it," said Townshend. " He has had more privileges than I."

" Rose ! Rose !" called Lida, running up. " We are all to be moved immediately. They are firing on the wounded and Red Cross from the trees, and they've

killed Lena! She went out to meet some wounded and—"

Lida flung her apron over her head and burst into tears.

"And Shirley got up and is making them dress him, and he's going to try to find them. I *know* he'll be killed!" she sobbed.

"He oughtn't to be allowed to go," said Townshend. "Tell him I order him to stay."

"And you're his captain, and he'll have to obey!" cried Lida, darting away like a deer.

But Shirley had already gone, taking his right arm out of its sling against everybody's advice, but first sending word to the front that the wounded were being fired on and asking the colonel to send some sharpshooters to clear the trees of Spaniards.

In a few hours Shirley was back, leaning heavily on the arm of one of his own troopers, having again separated his broken collar-bone and set up a worse inflammation than yesterday.

"But he killed a Spaniard," said the trooper, with a grin of pride. "Here's the cuss's Mauser and cartridge-belt. He pitched out of the tree where he had been firing at the wounded all day. I took one kick at him myself after the lieutenant killed him. It was all there was left to do."

"He's the one who killed poor little Lena," gasped Shirley. "I would have died if I hadn't found him."

The blistering day slowly dragged its weary length away. It grew no cooler towards evening. It was only a different kind of heat. The sun in Cuba has a curious way of dropping out of sight so suddenly that it seems as if it fell over a precipice, and of coming up in the morning as if shot out of a cannon.

The pain in Townshend's eyes grew so excruciating during the evening that he became delirious. Rose

knelt by his side with her finger on his pulse, renewing the ice bandages with anxious faithfulness. Ice was so scarce a commodity that every morsel of it was saved for bandages, and the luxury of iced water to drink was not to be thought of. Poor Dunlevy's fever was so acute that it seemed cruel not to let him share it. But after his first eager question: "Is that *ice* you have there, Captain Rose?" and after Rose had explained to him sorrowfully that it must all be saved for bandages, he smiled cheerfully and said: "Oh, don't mind *me!* It's only my thirst and it's my captain's *eyes!*" Nevertheless the sound of cracking the ice made the poor, fever-stricken lad so restless, in spite of his bravery, that when she removed the bandages she crept away into the thicket and broke the ice noiselessly with a pin, so that he need not be tantalized by the clink of it.

But it melted, oh, so fast. The night was one of stifling heat. Dr. Corey made the rounds at midnight, and Rose asked for more.

"More ice! Haven't you enough to last until morning? There isn't another piece in the whole place!"

Rose clutched his arm and drew him aside.

"Don't let him hear you!" she whispered. "I have only enough to last a few hours, and more may not come until noon. Is there any one we can send to the Red Cross for more?"

"Not a soul, unless I go. I would go, only—if any of those arteries break out that I am watching, the men might die of hemorrhage before the flow could be stopped."

"No, no! *You* could not be spared. How far is it?"

"Less than two miles, but the roads—"

"Listen to me. He *must* have ice. You understand that. If I only bring back enough to last through the night, I must get it."

"*You?*"

"Yes, *I*. I'm going."

"But how? Do you know the way? There isn't even a mule for you to ride, and you can't walk! No, no, *I* will go."

"*You* can't be spared," said Rose, earnestly. "If a man died while you were gone, I would feel like a murderer. It is dangerous for me to go, but I'll ride Minnehaha. She's never carried a lady, but she knows me and she is used to following a trail. At least let me *try*. *Let* me."

Dr. Corey hesitated. A thousand dangers presented themselves to his mind of which the girl before him was unmindful or ignorant.

"I can ride any sort of a horse and on any kind of a saddle," Rose went on. "I was brought up on horseback when my uncle was at Fort Assiniboine. If you will only promise to keep his bandages supplied while I am gone, I will be back here with ice before dawn."

"Well, there is nothing else to do," sighed the surgeon. "I shall never forgive myself if anything happens to you. But I know if anybody on earth can do it, you can. I give you my word of honor to see to his bandages myself, so make yourself easy on that score, and feel free to put your whole mind on the task before you."

"Oh, Dr. Corey," whispered Rose, seizing his hand. "I will not fail you. If only everybody could know what you have done for all of us, the list of heroes would not be complete without your name. Now listen. When he wakens, tell him I've gone to lie down. He made me promise."

She slipped away, but came back to whisper in the surgeon's ear:

"If I am not back by daylight you may know that something has happened and that I need help."

Then she made her way silently through the trees, trying not to be afraid, to where Minnehaha was picketed. The mare was lying down, and at Rose's step she sprang up with a noise that almost stopped the girl's heart. She leaned against a tree, with her hands pressed against her side.

"I'll never be able to do it, if I am as frightened as that to begin with," she said to herself.

The mare sniffed suspiciously, and tugged at her halter, but Rose spoke to her, and quieted her before she went near. She remembered Townshend's warning.

"Good girl," she murmured, holding out her hand. Minnehaha reached out her satin nose, and Rose patted her neck.

"Will you have your saddle on, and will you let me ride you? It's for your master. Don't you understand? Come, now. Those shadows won't hurt you. That's only moonlight, and when we get out into the open, that light may keep you from breaking your leg in one of those terrible holes. Softly. Don't make a noise. I'm going to lead you out into the moonlight before I mount."

Dr. Corey followed, and from the line of tents he saw her mount the mare, who only turned her head inquisitively as she felt Rose's skirts. He saw Rose settle herself in the hard, uncomfortable saddle, and pat the mare's neck and bend over and shake the saddle to see if it were secure. He knew that she was gaining Minnehaha's confidence, and that they would understand each other before she started. The moon was obscured now and then by ragged clouds which flitted across the sky. Rose looked around, and, seeing the doctor, she waved her hand. He waved back, "God-speed." Then she turned and spoke to the mare, and Minnehaha moved away cautiously, picking her way and shaking her

handsome head as if she liked and yet disliked the task before her.

Once on horseback, all Rose's courage came back to her. She went slowly, and yet, careful as she was, Minnehaha slipped and slid, and once got her forefeet into such a hole that Rose had to dismount and lead her. Twice she lost the trail, and retraced her steps. Bonfires were burning on the surrounding hills. The sounds of occasional firing came to her ears. The whole night was uncanny and full of strange noises. Rose wondered what those signals meant. There were rumors of a truce, but the woman's heart in the girl had lost some of its eager patriotism now that her lover and her brother and two of her boys lay wounded in one hospital. Back there in that white line of tents her patriotism centred, and the fires on the hills meant far less to her to-day than they would have meant yesterday, with Townshend and Shirley at the front.

Finally a sudden clearing revealed the blessed sight of the permanent Red Cross hospital, which was supplied from the *State of Texas* in the harbor.

The advent at two o'clock in the morning of a woman on horseback, in her blood-stained nurse's costume, demanding ice in a breathless voice, created no small disturbance. Nurses and attendants, who were getting their first sleep in sixty hours, woke and came out. When they saw who it was, they begged her to send the ice and remain until daylight, but Rose would not listen.

"Please don't make it any harder for me to refuse," she implored. "It is to save the eyesight of Captain Townshend, and Dr. Corey expects me back at four o'clock. I *couldn't* stay. Just don't delay me, that's all I ask."

"But how will you carry it?"

" I don't know," said Rose, helplessly. " I hadn't got that far."

" The only way is to put that little Cuban boy, Tora, on the lame mule, and make him carry it. We can let you have fifty pounds, if you'll take it that way."

" Indeed I will. And can you let me have some more antiseptic gauze ?"

" We haven't it even for ourselves. It all gave out last night."

In the half-hour that they were rounding up the sleepy little Cuban and loading the mule, Rose found numberless small things which she could carry, and which she liberally supplied herself with. The Red Cross were all eager to serve her, and they sent one of their assistants to put her safely back upon her trail. The lame mule lagged behind to such an extent that Rose finally took his halter herself, much to Minnehaha's annoyance, and thus she made her slow and painful way back to camp.

There was nothing picturesque or beautiful in the sorry little procession. There was no dash or spirit to the lonely midnight ride the girl took. It was a journey full of heartbreak and pain, but she underwent the fatigue and terror of it for the sake of the man she loved, without a thought of self, and only as she reached home, and saw the surgeon coming out to meet her in the early dawn with the welcome news that she was in time, did she realize what she had done.

As she slid off the horse, her cramped limbs refused to bear her up, and she sank to the ground helplessly.

Dr. Corey knew better than to pity her. He only picked her up and carried her, as the Rough Riders can remember his carrying the wounded from the field on that terrible first day of San Juan Hill, and took her clear to her post of duty beside Townshend and Dunlevy, saying, cheerfully :

"Good girl! You've done wonders. Another half-hour and the ice would have given out. Sit up here, and look for yourself. There. That's the last. That piece the size of my two fists."

"Give Dunlevy a drink of ice-water," said Rose, feebly. "He wanted it, and I wouldn't let him have it. I'm going to sleep. I just can't help it."

And with that she dropped down where she was and slept on the ground, with only a blanket under her, the utter dead sleep of exhaustion, with Townshend's hand on her hair the whole time.

The next day a truce was declared and the field hospital was moved down to the permanent Red Cross.

The last ceremony which was performed before the tents were struck was the burial service over little Lena, who had given up her life as gallantly as any of the boys in blue whose last messages she had taken and whose eyes she had closed. They buried her just at sunrise, her body wrapped in the flag, a young bugler whose wound she had dressed only the day before playing "Taps" as the earth fell upon the folds of the Stars and Stripes—"Out your lights! Out your lights!" over her grave.

To Rose and Lida, and even to the Red Cross assistants and to the wounded, Lena's death seemed one of the saddest in all that calendar of tragedies. She had clung to Rose with such love, shielding her from hardships before Rose could prevent her, and following her every movement with such a world of love in her eyes that it brought a lump to the throat to see her devotion. Only Townshend knew why, and to him Rose could pour out her grief at Lena's sad story and pitiful death, knowing that she was betraying no confidence.

Rose insisted that Townshend should not be told of her midnight ride, for she noticed that any mental disquiet increased his fever.

For five days and five nights she only left his bedside to rest. Shirley was able to be up and about, lending aid to the others.

The First Illinois, with Oscar Gregory in command of a company, had arrived, and it devolved upon Shirley, who knew nothing of the tragedy her name would awaken, to tell him of poor Lena's death and burial upon the field of battle. When Rose questioned him, all Shirley seemed to have noticed was that "he seemed awfully cut up about it." But if that were all, Rose breathed freely for Marion's sake.

Poor little Lena! She had nobly expiated her sin.

On the morning of the fifth day Dr. Corey promised to test Townshend's eyesight with safety.

All the hospital had seen long ago how it was between Rose and her patient, but utterly oblivious to appearances, as usual, Rose braved criticism, giving herself up where her heart led, with a child-like confidence that no one would notice or care or comment.

Just before the bandages were to be removed Townshend called Rose to him.

She knelt down beside him and took both his hands in hers.

"What is it, dear?"

Townshend breathed heavily a moment before he could steady his voice.

"I wanted—I must say 'good-bye' to you, Rose, darling, before they take the bandage off, for it may be that it will find me—blind. No, wait a moment. I know what you are going to say. But I could never consent to that. Your beautiful young life, so full of hope and promise, must never be clouded by the task of having to lead a blind companion at your side. You must face the question, darling, and be brave, for blindness means twice to me what it does to you."

"Oh, Sterling! You can't mean to be so cruel! Do

you think you have any right to be so selfish? Won't you consider me at all?"

Tears forced themselves from under the bandage and crept down the man's cheeks.

"I *am* considering you, beloved. I am tearing my own heart out by what I am saying. But it is because I love you."

"Do you love me well enough to be very unselfish, dear?" whispered Rose. "Will you let me share your anxiety? Will you let me take the risk with you?"

"How do you mean?"

"I mean to marry me here, now, *before* they take the bandage off. Let me help you to bear it if we find that you are—blind. Then I should be spared having to marry a blind man, for you would have become blind after you married me and it would then be a wife's duty to care for you always!"

"Oh, beloved!" groaned Townshend, crushing her hands against his lips. "Oh, the torture of not being able to see your face when you say these things. I am missing half my life!"

"Will you? Answer me!"

"No! No! A thousand times no! I cannot—for your sake!"

"It is not for my sake," urged Rose. "If you really love me, as you say you do, and as I want to be loved, you will do it."

A long time the man lay silent, battling with the temptation, Rose murmuring in his ear the entire time.

"It will kill me if you refuse," she said at last. "My whole life is bound up in yours, and you have no right, after pursuing me for over a year and making me love you, to deny me now. Will you?"

How he came to consent he never knew. He thought afterwards that he could not have been in his right mind. But it all came so suddenly, so overpoweringly.

In a few moments word spread through the hospital that Miss Hollenden was to be married to Captain Townshend before his bandages were removed, and there was a group of the most eager, tearful, yet smiling witnesses around his bed that ever looked upon a marriage ceremony.

Rose still knelt. She never released Townshend's hand after he promised, for fear he would weaken and take it back. She called Shirley and told him, and it took no urging to persuade the others.

The chaplain of the Rough Riders married them, and then, before any one moved or spoke, Dr. Corey bent over, and, shielding Townshend's eyes from the light, he cut the bandage away.

Rose leaned over him, pale and breathless. Townshend lay there, motionless for a moment, not daring to make the test which meant so much. Rose bent and kissed him.

"Beloved!" she said.

Then Townshend half fearfully opened his eyes, and the first object their sight rested upon was the face of his wife.

CHAPTER XXXIII

MR. HOLLENDEN read and crumpled in his hand the cablegram announcing Rose's marriage to Townshend. He did not object to Townshend except that he feared that Rose would persuade him to live in America and that the separation between himself and his children was now final and complete. This, in spite of the apparent hardness of his heart, was a real blow. Maria had done her work well. She had thoroughly instilled into her father's mind her own ambition to cut loose from America and to become a social power in the French capital. But his thorough knowledge of the character of the Marquis d'Auteuil had forced him to a course of severity which he afterwards intended to soften. After Maria had learned her lesson—and he had had no doubt but that her husband would lose no time in teaching it to her—he meant to come to her rescue with all the means in his power. With himself married to the comtesse and his daughter married to the marquis, he felt that perhaps even Rose might see her way clear, by proper persuasion, to make a titled marriage. For these reasons, nebulous though they had been in America, he had practically burned his ships behind him. One by one during the last year he had been winding up his affairs in the United States and preparing to expatriate himself permanently.

But disappointments came upon him thick and fast. Maria's death struck at the root of his being, for, in spite of her disagreeable qualities, she undoubtedly was the

tower of social strength upon which he leaned. He had both feared and admired her. He admired her the more, because he alone realized whence she sprang. That she should have risen, by sheer force of will, and in spite of almost overpowering obstacles, to be the Marquise d'Auteuil, he regarded with the admiration which only an American man of business can completely comprehend. He had felt the same admiration once for a man who had outwitted him at his own game and lost him upward of three millions of dollars. He afterwards took that man into partnership and trusted him implicitly, with never a cause to regret it.

He was thinking over these old days as he stood crumpling and re-reading Rose's cablegram. He was through with all such things. He had lost his children one by one, and yet, in a blaze of glory, at the very moment when he felt the breach widening more and more between country and children, there had come into his hard and barren life this one great passion, sweeping him off his feet, back to youth and hope and all the gentleness and grace of which he had had glimpses in his young manhood, but which he had choked and killed by success and the lust of power. It was as if he had never loved before. Nay, as he loved and yielded himself up now, he never *had* loved before. He had married, dominated, and buried his other two wives, marrying them because he wanted them, and going about it in the same determined way which actuated his proceedings when he wanted a particularly valuable block of stock, and which often deceives even clever women into believing themselves besieged by the victims of a great passion, instead of realizing that they are merely desirable property.

The peril of Rose and Shirley, the horrors of war, never completely came home to him. He was living in Paradise. The emptiness and gloom of his grand house never struck him, because he always looked forward to

the time when the comtesse would vivify it with her beauty and grace, and he regarded its splendors with almost passionate gratitude for her sake.

He had often puzzled his brain trying to determine why the comtesse would not permit him to mention marriage to her. To every effort she had said, " Not now. The time is not yet ripe. We must wait until affairs adjust themselves." Since the departure of his family she had been more gay and had given him more of her time. He had not failed to notice that. She always questioned him minutely about the children's movements. Where were they ? Had they got their appointments ? Had they gone to the front ? How brave of them ! For of course they were in danger ? And to all these vivacious questions he had answered her stupidly and literally, not knowing why she asked. Suddenly it dawned upon him that she did not like Rose and Shirley—how could she, when they had treated her so abominably ?—and perhaps, now that it was settled that they were to remain in America, and she knew herself to be safe from their intrusion, she might permit herself to receive his proposals. The thought illuminated his face until all the hard, cold lines disappeared. He almost felt tears in his eyes. He thrust the cablegram in his pocket and prepared to visit her.

The marquise and her daughter were drinking their coffee in the salon when Mr. Hollenden was announced.

" Go, dear maman, soon after he enters, for to-night I shall settle matters. Say a prayer of gratitude, for to-morrow my words of greeting will be, ' Good-morning, my darling. He has given me the tapestries.' And rest assured I shall lose no time in having them transferred to Vrianault."

The hard, agate-colored eyes of the old Frenchwoman softened under her daughter's words. She did as the comtesse suggested, but she turned at the door, and, look-

ing back, she saw Eugénie trail her pink-tipped, magnetic fingers down the old man's cheek.

The face of the old marquise flamed with indignation.

" Really," she said to herself, " Eugénie is at times as disgusting as an American. I shall be thankful when she has at last got the tapestries and we can dismiss that odious old man who tempts the devil in her."

The comtesse had gowned herself especially for her scene. She wore a low-cut bodice, held over one shoulder by a row of pearls, and a satin skirt which fitted tightly every curve of her beautiful, lithe body. She was smoking a cigarette, and leaning back in the corner of a divan, with her knees crossed, as Mr. Hollenden dragged up a Chippendale chair and sat beside her.

Mr. Hollenden was a heavy man, the chair was delicate, and the comtesse was thrifty, yet there was a look in the old man's eyes which warned the Frenchwoman to let him smash the chair rather than break the spell which her forethought had already begun to weave.

If the American had not been moved by a love which made of the comtesse a creature absolutely pure and holy, he would have seen in her attitude and in the expression of her half-closed eyes, the mocking cruelty of her nature. He was kneeling at her feet and worshipping her in thought. She was setting herself to craze and rob him.

He sat looking at her in dumb adoration, and she permitted his silent gaze. Then, with a slow, sleepy movement, she reached up her bare arm and deliberately turned out one, two, three of the electric lights, leaving only a rose-shaded lamp overhead to shed its becoming light upon them both. She was almost sorry to do this. Really, the expression on his face was most amusing. It was so thoroughly typical—not at all like a Frenchman's. What a pity to miss any of it! However—and she sighed.

"Aren't you going to kiss me?" she murmured, reproachfully.

With a groan he threw himself upon his knees beside her and covered her face with kisses. She slowly wrapped her soft arms around him and drew his head down till his cheek rested on her breast.

"Do you know what I have been thinking," she said, in her soft, clear murmur, which was neither a whisper nor a tone.

"No. Tell me."

"I have been wondering if you would forgive my naughty brother for my sake, and if you would give me those tapestries. I want them so! I want them so! I don't want maman to have them, nor Raoul. But I want them to be mine. I want to have a hold over maman. It is not easy to live with her at times. Her pride makes her cruel to me. And I want her to be obliged to say to herself, 'I must respect my daughter. The tapestries are Eugénie's.' Will you give them to me?"

"With all my heart—"

"Stay," murmured the comtesse. "Before you answer me, kiss me once more and think well what I am asking. Don't answer me hastily and then regret it. But kiss me while you are considering."

There was a tear on the woman's cheek, wrung from the innermost core of the man's heart by the exquisiteness of her appeal. The comtesse removed it by the tip of her little finger and put her arms around him again.

"I give them to you with all my love and all my heart. You should have had them sooner if I had dreamed that *you* wanted them—that they would have made your life easier. From now on I shall consider them yours every time I look at them, until the time comes when you will consent to make a home for me among them."

The comtesse cleared her throat. Then she released her arms and turned her face away.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Hollenden, anxiously. He knew the signs of her caprice.

She made no reply.

"Are you vexed because I spoke to you of marriage when you have forbidden me? But I have a reason, an excuse, now. Rose is married to Mr. Townshend. I have Shirley's cablegram in my pocket, so that they will never come back to Paris to annoy you."

"Really?" cried the comtesse, taking his face between her hands and staring at him eagerly. Her tones were breathless.

"Really! Does that give you so much pleasure, my love? But they *were* cruel to you! My God! How could they be unkind to such an angel as you?"

"Angel!" thought the comtesse, with a grin. It was a long time since she had been called an angel. Even her husband had never gone so far as that. Quite the contrary, if she remembered correctly.

"Yes, they were very cruel," she murmured. "They did not understand me. No one ever did understand me except *you!*"

"I know it, dear. It seems wonderful to me how completely I do understand you. Every one seems to disagree with me, but I *know* that I hold the key to your nature."

He was quite pleased with himself for that speech. Love was making him eloquent. "Key to your nature." That was good—undeniably good.

"You do, and you alone, and for that reason you will not misunderstand me when I say that the tapestries must go back to Vrianault, where they belong. They look out of place in your house. They are in bad taste. Maria and I always agreed on that. They belong in an old château."

"So they do," exclaimed Mr. Hollenden. "I hadn't thought of that. I will have them taken down and sent to Vrianault to-morrow. Does that please you?"

"Please me!" cried the Frenchwoman in rapture. "It delights—it enchants me! If you had thought and planned a thousand years you could not have charmed me more! How thoughtful of you! How generous! But you are always generous—the most generous of men! You are always thinking of something more to give me, to make my lonely life more bright and happy!"

"Do I make you happy?" he asked. "Could you be happy with me? Ah, I know you could. I am not an old man even yet. If you will marry me, I will lay everything at your feet. I will make marriage settlements on you according to the French custom. You shall travel—you shall have a yacht, a palace to live in—my whole life shall be given up to make you happy. I love you! I love you! Tell me, will you be my wife?"

The Frenchwoman flung back her head in an ecstasy. She was absolutely intoxicated with the picture he painted. Her wildest dreams were about to be realized. Here was an end to all the hard, money-pressed past, and a future too rosy to dream of calmly. Oh, what joy to be able to snap her fingers in her friends' faces and dispense her *largesse* before their eyes like a queen. Her breath came hot and fast from between her lips. Mr. Hollenden was pressing her for an answer. She sat up suddenly. Her eyes gleamed like stars in the soft light. Her beauty was undeniable, and her charms had penetrated to the depths of the man's being. He was pouring out all his deepest, most sacred emotions, and reverently awaiting her answer. He had asked her to be his wife.

"Listen to me!" she cried, smiling brilliantly into his face and caressing his hair with her trailing fingers. "I love you with all my heart. I love you—do you

understand? Is that not enough? I will make you supremely happy. I will devote my life to you. I will never look at any other man. It can be arranged. I will travel with you. Maman will go with us—for appearance' sake. We will observe the proprieties. It is bad taste to shock the world. We will not shock it—no! We shall be together always. You shall make me rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and I shall give you—myself. Come. I have planned it all out. They will criticise me for taking an American, but *you* will know that it is because I *love* you, and love means everything—excuses everything with a Frenchwoman. You have made me so happy! See, let me turn up the lights! Look at me! Look at me!—and love me!"

She turned on a flood of electric light, and, pushing him away from her, she sprang up.

The American staggered to his feet and covered his face with his hands.

The comtesse walked rapidly to the end of the salon and back again. Her cheeks were flushed with her triumph. She snapped her fingers.

"Bah!" she cried. "That! for Clarice Flamont and her little Rouen with only sixty thousand francs a year! Think what you will permit *me* to do with your sublime fortune! And I with a better figure than Clarice, although her eyes are finer than mine. Come, tell me—aren't you glad I am handsome? Aren't you glad you have made me so happy?"

The American still covered his face and still said nothing. Great drops of sweat stood on his forehead and trickled down between his fingers.

"Oh, my friend, you are ill!" murmured the comtesse. "Take your leave of me, and let me ring for your carriage. To-morrow we shall both be more calm. Think of me to-night as the proudest and happiest woman in Paris. Think also that you—*you* alone—have made me

so. Come to-morrow to breakfast at twelve. Good-night, my best friend!"

She almost pushed him into the arms of the butler. She was anxious to be alone. She had some letters to write. She wanted to spread her good fortune. Ah, God! how happy she was! How proud Raoul would be! He had always called her clever—the cleverest woman he knew. And now she had proved it. To succeed! What satisfaction there was in the thought! To have one's months of craft and plots and patient waiting end in the goal of all one's desires! Ah, it was almost too good to be true! The comtesse kissed her hand to her own smiling image in the gilt-framed mirror. Then she went to her desk and began to write.

CHAPTER XXXIV

TWO weeks later Mr. Hollenden was pronounced well enough to leave the house, and his man supported him down to the carriage. He had ordered out Maria's victoria—poor Maria!—he never saw anything of hers that he did not experience a pang of grief and remorse, which seemed to grow more poignant as time went on. He wondered why it were not true in his case that time healed. Could it be possible that the change was being wrought in his own heart—that his disappointments were softening him

He hesitated a moment before he gave the order to the footman. Where should he go? The *Campania's* mail had arrived that morning, perhaps some Americans bound for Paris had been on board. He would go to Munroe's and see. It was a new sensation for him to wish to see Americans. But to-day he wanted to see some one—any one fresh from home. He started a little as that word "home" came into his mind. "Home?" Then, after all, home meant America, and perhaps this pain, this hungry feeling, this yearning for the sight of a familiar face was homesickness.

He leaned heavily on the footman's arm as, with the aid of his stick, he climbed the stairs of No. 7 rue Scribe—those stairs which resound all day to the click of American heels, and whose balustrades are kept polished by American hands. Everybody remembers those stairs.

As he entered the first door to the right—where you register and ask for your mail and sit down, if you can

not possibly wait to reach home, to read your American letters—the first person he saw was John Wilkinson, one of the boys who used to sit around his red-hot stove in Michigan and spin yarns, now grown rich and prosperous, and, as usual, come to Europe to be polished off by an ambitious family.

A month ago Mr. Hollenden would have kept away from a man who looked so hopelessly Western as Wilkinson, looking at him through the eyes of the comtesse. But this morning he went up to him with an eagerness that was almost painful.

Wilkinson pulled off his eye-glasses, then put them on again half-way down his nose, threw back his head, and looked at him.

"Don't you know me?" asked Mr. Hollenden.

"Bless my soul! Bless my stars! If it isn't Jim Hollenden! But that there geranium in your buttonhole threw me off. You didn't use to wear a wreath of flowers in your hair when *I* knew you! But what have you done to yourself, and, say, how in the devil do you get the ends of your mustache to stand up in that sassy way? You've got to be a dude—a regular damned old French dude!"

The old familiar vernacular warmed Mr. Hollenden's blood. Wilkinson was the most intimate friend he had ever had, if a man of Mr. Hollenden's nature ever could be said to have an intimate. They, at least, had never lost sight of each other, and occasionally they dictated a facetious letter, referring to old times or new deals, which served to keep them in touch.

"I've been ill," said Mr. Hollenden.

"Sick, have you? Well, who's your friend?" said Mr. Wilkinson, jerking his thumb in the direction of the respectful flunky.

"That's my footman. You needn't whisper. He can't speak English."

"Your footman! Great Scot! I thought it was the Tzar. And can't speak English? Do you mean to tell me, Jim Hollenden, that you can parley-voo?"

"My children don't think so. But I can make the servants understand what I want."

"Well, I'll be switched! I'm scared to death of you!"

"Oh, *don't* be! I want you to come with me—right now. We'll take a drive and then go to breakfast at Ledoyen's."

"Breakfast! Good land! I had my breakfast at seven, as usual. I'll want dinner when the horn blows at twelve o'clock."

"Well, they call it breakfast. They haven't got any word in the whole dratted language for lunch. You have two breakfasts, and then you skip to dinner. But you're right. We'll have dinner at twelve o'clock. Shall I take you to where you can get the best duck you ever tasted?"

"No, take me to the place you said first. Le—what do you call it?"

"Ledoyen's. It's in the Champs Élysées."

"Lee-dwah-yah-n's, in the Shah-n-ss Ay-lee-zay! Oh, God! I'll take that home and fire it at the old woman. She'll fall dead. Say, Jim, you're a bird! Do you know it?"

Mr. Hollenden had been so systematically snubbed for a year and a half that to be called "a bird," in cheerful American slang, warmed the very cockles of his heart. It gave him new strength.

"Here, fire the archbishop and lean on me," said Wilkinson, as the footman offered his mulberry arm.

"Is that chariot yours, Elijah?" asked Wilkinson. "And is that emperor up there your mule-driver? Hold my hand. I'm about to faint. You get in. I'm going to kneel down and say my prayers to these two gentlemen in uniforms before I sink into that overstuffed

feather-bed of a carriage. Say, if the king has a brush-broom, he'd better dust me off before I put my jeans on those white velvet cushions."

"John, you're better than all the doctors and physic in the world," said Mr. Hollenden. "We'll drive around through the boulevards first."

"Oh, hang the boulevards! I've seen miles of boulevards in Chicago. They put me to sleep. Let's see the town."

"But the boulevards here *are* the town. You sit still and let me have something to say. You never would let a man call his soul his own."

"Sit still? I can't sit still in this swinging, rubber-tired thing. I feel as if I was sitting on the cat in a hammock. I'm getting sea-sick."

Mr. Hollenden showed him the Bourse and the Opéra, and the obélisque and the Madeleine, and Mr. Wilkinson pronounced each of them "great."

Then, through the Place de la Concorde, the victoria swept into the Champs Élysées, and Mr. Wilkinson practised on the name of it until, across the walk, they drove into Ledoyen's.

Half a dozen waiters skipped out to the carriage to assist them.

"Well, am I a cripple, or ain't I?" demanded Mr. Wilkinson. "Take away these frog-eating, living crutches, and let me walk on my own two feet."

"They seem to know you," he went on, as madame at the desk bowed to him, and the proprietor in person led the way to a favorite table, and snatched the flowers off his wife's desk to place at Mr. Hollenden's right hand. One waiter took their hats, another their sticks, while a third slid footstools under the table, which bent Mr. Wilkinson's long legs painfully.

"Tell 'em to put my feet in a mustard bath, hold my smelling-salts under my nose, and send word to the family

that I died trusting in God. It reminds me of that picture, 'The Death-bed of Luther,'" said Mr. Wilkinson.

To the astonishment of the nimble waiters, he kicked the footstools into the middle of the floor and tucked his napkin into his collar, saying, briskly, "Now then, what shall we have to eat?"

Mr. Hollenden set himself to order. Each dish he intended to be a surprise to his friend, even though everybody knew Jim Hollenden's prowess in dinner-giving. The wine-list brought the proprietor and three waiters again. Mr. Wilkinson watched Mr. Hollenden's proceedings with affectionate pride. He delighted to find him a person of so much importance.

The table was close to the open window, and, almost on a level with their elbows, the warm, moist earth of the garden, with its sweet green-growing things and tame birds hopping near, gave a sensation of nearness to nature which you get nowhere in all Paris except at Ledoyen's. The scents and sounds were almost like those which come to you when you lie down on the ground in the woods with your hat over your eyes and drink in the atmosphere of mid-June.

These two men felt its influence. Mr. Hollenden's pale face and lack of appetite worried his friend, and when the cigars and liqueurs were brought on he leaned his arms on the table and said, kindly,

"Now, Jim. Tell me about it."

Mr. Hollenden smoked in silence for a moment, then brought his fist down on the table with a blow which made the glasses dance and which brought the three waiters again.

"I *will* tell you!" he said. "It 'll do me good."

And then he told him.

"You and I aren't up with the times, old man," he added, bitterly. "It is no longer fashionable to reverence a woman. The women themselves won't let you."

"Thank God, they will across the pond," said Wilkinson. "Did you never see her after that night?"

"Never! She came to see me several times, but the butler had orders not to admit her. Then she wrote me a letter—I'll show it to you, horns, cloven hoof, and all—in which she asked if I meant to keep my word about the tapestries. I replied that they had already been taken down and sent to Vrianault, and that she would please accept them with my compliments."

"By Jove! Jim!"

"Yes, I did!"

The two men sat and looked at each other and smoked silently.

"Well," resumed Mr. Hollenden, "I wouldn't have missed coming to Paris for a good deal. It's been an eye-opener. And I wouldn't have missed knowing the comtesse. She's been an education to me. Her family, in one way or another—mostly the other—have got enough money out of my family to last them comfortably for life. I've given her diamonds worth a fortune. But she's welcome to them. I've been a mark, nothing but a mark, for all Paris. I've been overcharged at every shop, every hotel, every restaurant I've gone into. I believe the news of my arrival was spread through the police. I've paid for broken windows I never looked through, broken chairs I never sat in, dishes I never ordered, and drinks I never saw. Whenever I go to a hotel, they look over the repairs they need, and put 'em in my bill. I've paid commissions and taxes and extras and sundries until I wonder now how I could have been such a fool. I've alienated my children's affections, and sneered at my native land, and made more kinds of a damned fool of myself than *any* man ever did before. And I'm broken-hearted, John. I'm wrecked. I've got only one ambition left in life, and that is to get *home*. I want to make up to my children for all I've done to them. I want to

see the flag again—I tell you, man, it takes the French to make you appreciate Old Glory. I want to shake the dust of this infernal town off my feet and get back to honesty and sincerity. The honest rascality of American business methods that I've fought all my life is like the teaching of the Bible compared to the slipperiness of the French. I feel mean to think that I stayed over here while war was going on. I've subscribed ten thousand dollars in Rose's name for the sick soldiers, and I'm going home to make those children hold their heads up again. I'll win them back, John! If your wife and daughters are over here to do the same thing that we've done, give 'em their head. But, mark my words, *you'll* hate it, and they'll regret it. You can have my house, just as it stands, until October, with my compliments, and then, if you like it and want to stay, you can rent it of me. If not, put it into the hands of my agents, and I'll meet you on the New York pier. But, as for *me, I'm* going *home!*"

FINIS